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Special Issue

INSIDE

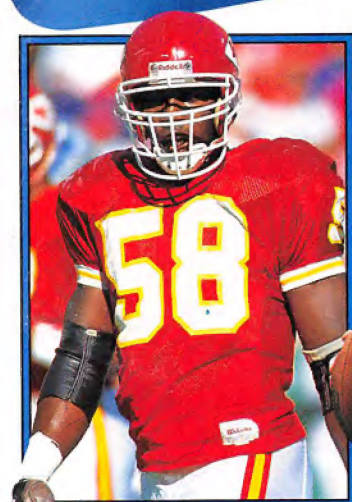
SPORTS

AUGUST 1991

1991 NFL & COLLEGE

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Exclusive analysis of every NFL team • The top 20 teams in college football



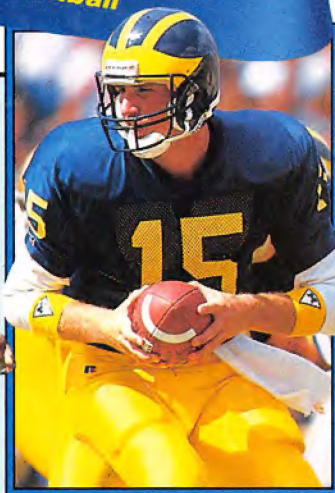
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Kansas City Chiefs



PHIL SIMMS
New York Giants



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Florida State



ELVIS GRBAC
Michigan

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AFC West: Kansas City Chiefs
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NFC Central: Minnesota Vikings
NFC West: San Francisco 49ers

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No. 1 team: Florida State

- | | |
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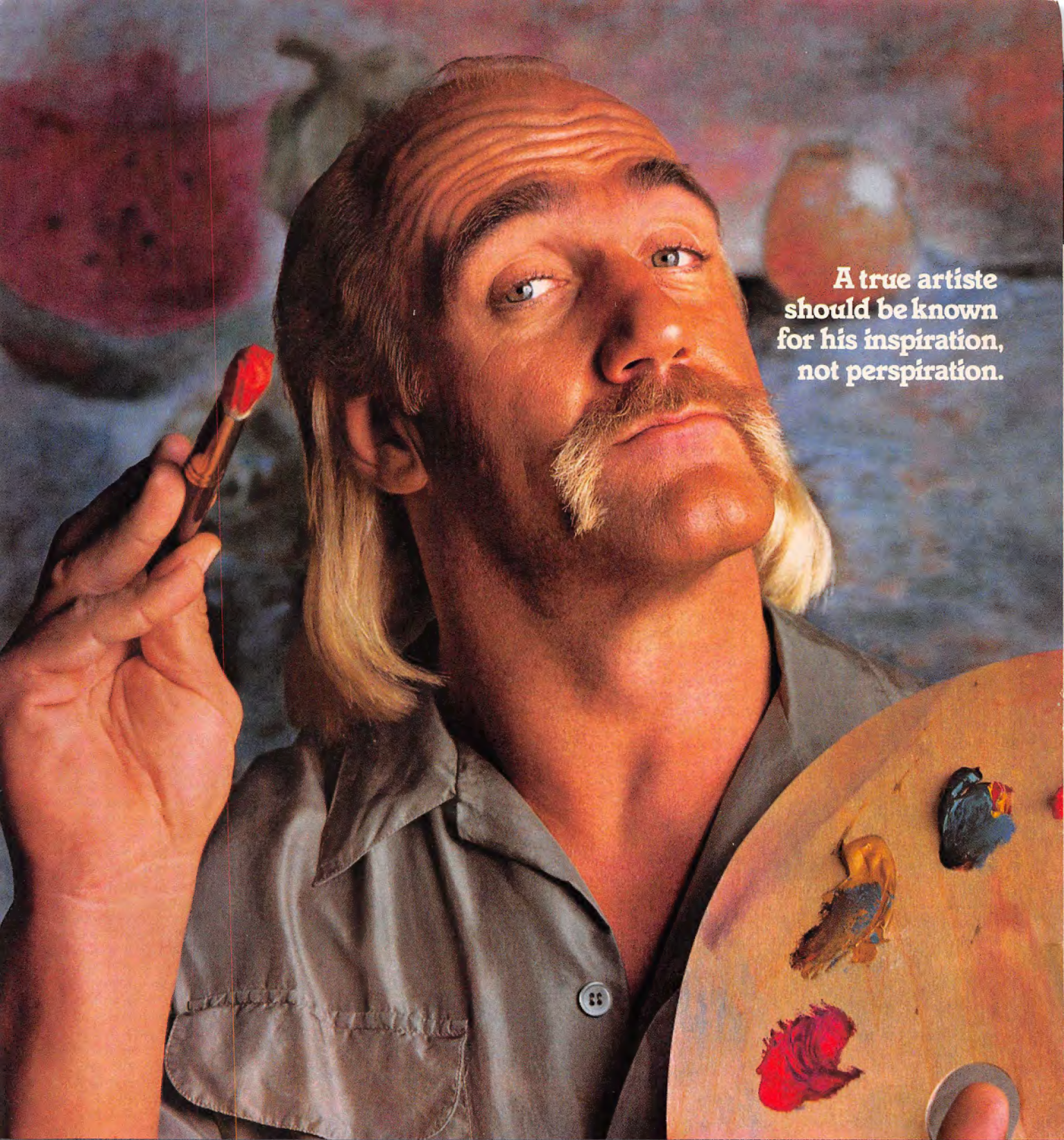
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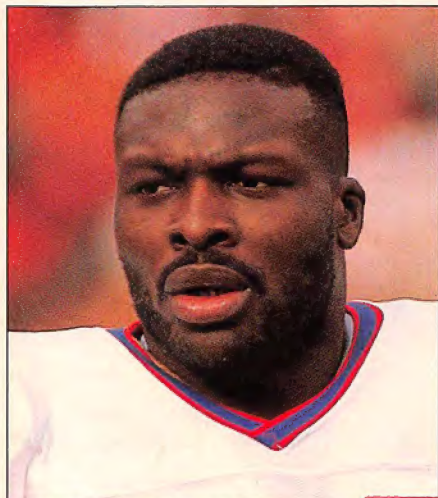


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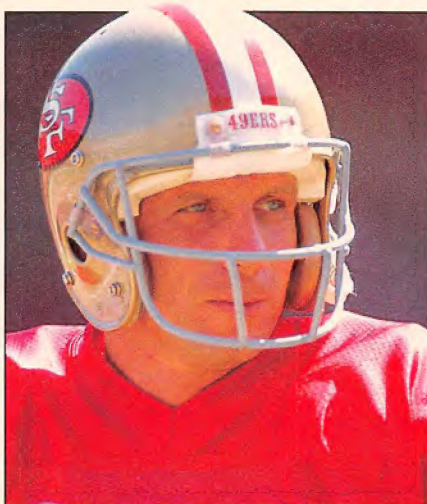


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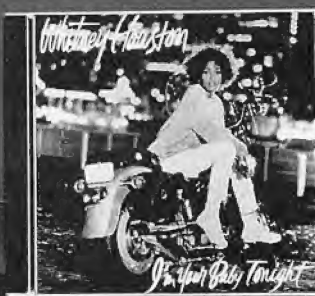
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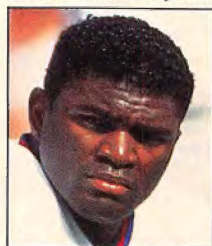
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ALL EYES ARE FOCUSED ON THE New York Giants this season as they try to become the fifth team in NFL history to repeat as Super Bowl champions. Within the last 11 years, only the San Francisco 49ers were able to lay claim to elusive back-to-back championships. Prior to that, the Green Bay Packers, Miami Dolphins, and Pittsburgh Steelers (twice) won consecutive Super Bowls. The last time the Giants won the Super Bowl was in 1986, and in the following season we saw the team produce more books written by the players than victories.

Can the Giants win it all again this year? Will **Phil Simms** or **Jeff Hostetler** lead the team to the promised land? Will the Giants fall victim to the sophomore championship jinx?



TAYLOR

This month **INSIDE SPORTS** presents our 1991 NFL preview, and beginning on Page 28 writers Gary Myers and Greg Garber break down the league division by division, picking the winners and losers and explaining the reasons for their predicted successes and failures.

In the NFC our experts say the Giants figure to capture the East behind the speed of **Dave Meggett** and the strength of **Lawrence Taylor**. Minnesota, San Francisco, and Chicago will contend but fall short in trying to knock off the Giants for the NFC crown.

Our experts predict Buffalo, led by Pro Bowl quarterback **Jim Kelly**, will once again lead the Bills to the AFC East title. In the Central, our pick is the Pittsburgh Steelers, who will emerge behind quarterback **Bubby Brister** as the team to beat. And, we expect to see the Kansas City Chiefs not only win the AFC West title but challenge the New York Giants in Super Bowl XXVI. **Steve DeBerg** and **Derrick Thomas** will bring the team to the big dance for the first time in 21 years.

Speaking of the Chiefs, join writer Bob Kravitz on Page 58 as he takes an in-depth



SCHOTTENHEIMER

look at one of the NFL's most underrated coaches, **Marty Schottenheimer**. In just two years Schottenheimer has transformed the Chiefs from playoff pretenders to Super Bowl contenders. He may not be one of the most colorful coaches to pace the sidelines, but few can deny his reputation for turning a team around, as he did in Cleveland and now in Kansas City.

We also preview the 1991 college football season by projecting which team will be the best in the land. There are several outstanding teams vying for the national championship, but when the smoke clears, we expect to see **Bobby Bowden's** Florida State Seminoles finally emerge with the elusive trophy. Join writers Paul Ladewski, Brad Buchholz, and Mark Blaudschun as we rank the top 20 teams in college football, beginning on Page 64.

In addition, we present our 1991 pre-season All-America team, led by Houston Cougars quarterback **David Klingler**. Klingler edged out last year's Heisman Trophy winner, BYU's **Ty Detmer**, for first team honors on our squad. Writer Phil Axelrod offers his expert picks on our annual preseason team on Page 78.

Few defensive ends dominate a pro game with such authority as **Bruce Smith**. The Buffalo Bills' cocky perennial Pro Bowler not only talks a good game but backs it up as well. Smith speaks with Edward Kiersh about his place as the NFL's No. 1 defensive player and the heartbreaking disappointment he experienced coming just a few feet wide of winning Super Bowl XXV. Turn to Page 22 to find out what makes this super athlete tick in our colorful and lively interview.



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BELOW-THE-BELT DELIVERIES

High Pitching Profiles From a Low-Down Approach

IN BASEBALL'S EARLIEST DAYS, ALL PITCHERS THREW underhand. A rule change in 1884 legalized any delivery, and ever since, the classic release point has been right about 10 or 11 o'clock (from the hitter's perspective as he looks out at the mound). Yet, there has always been a distinct minority of sidearmers who dropped down below 9 o'clock, a curious breed loosely grouped together as "submariners."

In the strictest sense of the term, there have been two modern major leaguers who threw directly underhand: Carl Mays in the '20s—who, tragically, is best known for the pitch that killed Ray Chapman in 1920—and Eldon Auker in the '30s. Nearly as extreme was Ted Abernathy, a journeyman hurler in the '60s, who says, "My hand was right next to my knee-cap sometimes." Childhood memories of Abernathy influenced Kent Tekulve, a mainstay of the Pirates staff in the '70s, to change at the Double-A level. He, in turn, inspired Dan Quisenberry, a self-professed Tekulve clone, when they worked together after Quiz's rookie year in Kansas City. Mastering a 7:30 delivery enabled both Tekulve and Quisenberry to break through and establish themselves as premier closers.

Other pitchers have turned to submarining as a last-ditch consequence of injury. Abernathy learned the motion from Senators teammate Dick Hyde in an attempt to forestall surgery, and Auker says he pitched from down under because "I busted up my shoulder playing football." It can take years to make the transition and convince skeptics (although Auker, an extraordinary athlete by all accounts, only spent 4½ months in the minors). Abernathy resurfaced at 30 thanks to then-Indians manager Birdie Tebbetts, who had caught Auker in his playing days and even today remains a canny scout known for finding value in the unorthodox.

The style has its pros and cons. Among the advantages: (1) By

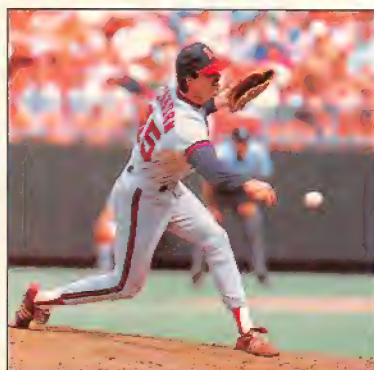
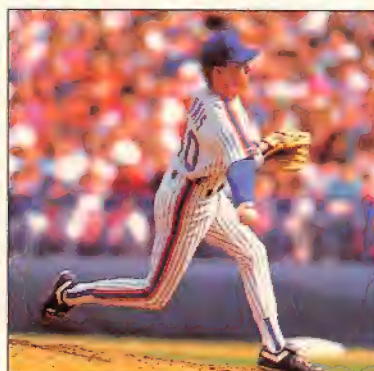
going along with the body's natural lines, the delivery produces little arm strain; (2) natural topspin results in a heavy sinker and a lot of ground balls; and (3) the different look can confuse batters. However, some say the pitch is easier to solve the second time through the lineup, and stamina is a question with the lanky types

who seem to favor it. In addition, lefties see it well (no one knows exactly why, but there seems to have been only one lefty submariner, Auker's teammate, Chief Hogsett), and considerations such as consistency, fielding, and holding runners on require further adaptation.

For these reasons, submariners often are best suited to relief. They thrive when used frequently, as sinkerballers will, and these late bloomers often display great longevity. Abernathy, Tekulve, and Quisenberry all became outstanding closers, mainly because they developed effective breaking stuff to jam lefties. Abernathy actually had a rising curve (Auker had a rising screwball, too), which prompted slugger Deron Johnson to grumble, "It took me 10 years to learn how to hit a

curve that breaks down, and now this." Abernathy and Quisenberry even tinkered with the knuckleball; Quiz remarks, "Sometimes it worked, but I also gave up a few homers, so I canned it in '84."

The four active submariners mostly bear out these theories: **Terry Leach, Twins (age 37).** This affable Alabamian has fashioned a respectable career after a rotator cuff injury forced him to retool. Breaking in with an impoverished Mets staff in 1981, Leach even threw a 10-inning one-hitter late in '82. He always seemed to be the odd man out breaking camp, but responded admirably in an emergency starter role in '87, winning his first 10 decisions (a club record) and finishing 11-1 with a 3.22 ERA. Another fine season as the long man followed (7-2, 2.54), but early in '89 the Mets inexplicably gave up on him. Following a stint in the overloaded



Modern-day submariners [clockwise from upper left] Leach, Innis, Eichhorn, and Olin: Their style might seem slightly underhanded, but they'll probably outlast their power-pitching contemporaries.

Royals bullpen, he did his usual workmanlike job last year for the Twins. Tom Kelly handles relievers skillfully, and Leach might not be through yet.

Jeff Innis, Mets (28): Like Leach, Innis has spent a lot of time shuttling between New York and Tidewater. (The two were briefly in the New York bullpen together, not an optimal arrangement.) Innis throws strikes and has done an adequate job in limited duty, although Tekulve feels "he can't quite get over the hump."

Mark Eichhorn, Angels (30): Eichhorn is different in that he delivers from the 8:30 position and relies on a changeup. He had a superlative rookie season with Toronto in '86 (14-6, 1.72). He nearly qualified for the ERA title (Hoyt Wilhelm in 1952 was the only pure reliever to win one), struck out more than a batter an inning, and complemented closer Tom Henke with 10 saves. However, after leading the AL with 89 appearances in 1987, he fell upon hard times until last year. Most of his career-high 13 saves in 1990 came when California's fireballing closer,

Bryan Harvey, got off to a rocky start. Although Eichhorn's high base-runner ratio alarmed manager Doug Rader, the departure of Willie Fraser should keep him busy.

Steve Olin, Indians (25): Quisenberry calls him "the submariner of the future. He's been doing it since high school, he's already got a

good slider, and he'll probably add a changeup." After bypassing Double-A ball, Olin converted 24 of 26 save opportunities at AAA Colorado Springs in 1989 and earned another quick promotion. Although he was sent down in June last year to work on attacking lefties, he returned in July and was sharp down the stretch. All told, he appeared in 50 games, posting marks of 4-4,

A CHRONOLOGY OF SUBMARINERS

Player	Career	G	GS	W	L	Saves	ERA
Carl Mays	1915-29	490	326	208	126	29	2.92
Eldon Auker	1933-42	333	261	130	101	2	4.42
Ted Abernathy	1955-72	681	34	63	69	148	3.46
Kent Tekulve	1974-89	1,050	0	94	90	184	2.85
Dan Quisenberry	1979-90	674	0	56	46	244	2.76
Terry Leach	1981-present	261	21	31	20	9	3.27
Mark Eichhorn	1982-present	307	7	31	28	28	3.17
Jeff Innis	1987-present	76	1	2	6	1	2.77
Steve Olin	1989-present	75	1	5	8	2	3.51

3.41. Despite the Tribe's effort to upgrade its rotation, it's safe to assume there will be plenty of work for the middle relievers, and Olin may eventually inherit the closer's job from 33-year-old Doug Jones.

Tekulve thinks the chances are good for another generation of submariners. "Talent has thinned out," he says, "so if you can get the job done, it doesn't matter how."

—RORY COSTELLO

MILE-HIGH MASCOT

The Giants Get Help From Above

THE NEW YORK GIANTS HAD MANY HEROES IN THEIR Super Bowl XXV victory last January. There were Jeff Hostetler and Ottis Anderson, Lawrence Taylor and Augie Stasio—*Augie Stasio?*

That's right, Augie Stasio. On a club celebrated for special teams players, Stasio stands out. Don't expect to find him on the Giants roster, though. Stasio was the airplane pilot who—as the ultimate Bill Parcells good luck charm—flew the team to its upset victories over the 49ers and the Bills.

His story begins in 1986, when the Giants were preparing to fly to San Francisco for a Monday night game with the 49ers. As the scheduled pilot, Stasio introduced himself to coach Parcells. As Stasio says, "He's not the most relaxed flyer," so Augie tried to relax the coach with friendly banter. That came easily enough: Growing up in the Bronx, Stasio had been a lifelong Giants fan. During his conversation with Parcells, Stasio noted that in 1980 he had flown the Oakland Raiders to a game where starting quarterback Dan Pastorini broke his leg—only to be replaced by the "washed up" Jim Plunkett, who then guided the team to the Super Bowl.

Now, for those of you just tuning in, Parcells was a *very* superstitious coach. His well-known habits included keeping plenty of elephant figurines (with their trunks turned up) and pennies (face up) around his office. So when the Giants roared back from a 17-0

halftime deficit to beat the Niners 21-17—well, the omens were clear to even the skeptics: Augie Stasio was better than a dozen rabbits' feet, er, elephants' trunks.

Parcells arranged for Stasio to fly the Giants to their first Super Bowl that year (XXI in Pasadena), as well as about a half-dozen games since. And when the Giants drove deeper into the 1990 playoffs, it was inevitable that Stasio would be in the cockpit. How inevitable? Saddam Hussein stood a better chance of kicking off for the Giants than anyone else had of flying that plane. Stasio flew the Giants to San Francisco, then waited as his flight crew formulated two flight plans: one, a return to Jersey if the Giants lost; the other, on to Tampa and the Super Bowl. "I ignored the one to Jersey," he says.

Stasio is optimistic about the Giants' chances for next year. "[Even] on the plane you could see that these guys are a real team," he says. As for his own future with the Giants, the Denver-based pilot-manager is uncertain. He insists there's no truth to rumors that he'll go Plan B free agent and eventually sign with Eddie DeBartolo and the 49ers. "It's up to the team," he says. "If I provide them with some luck, I'm happy to do it."

Better than a dozen elephants' trunks, any day.

—SHELDON SUNNESS

Is George Brett the first player to win batting titles in three decades?

C.S., Tampa

He is. Brett won in 1976 (.333), 1980 (.390), and last year (.325). He had a lifetime .311 average entering this season.

Since 1969, when the major leagues went to four divisions, which team has the most last-place finishes in each division of the National League? Also, has every NL team been last at least once?

J. K., Sparta, Tenn.

In the National League East, the Mets and Phillies have each finished sixth five times. In the NL West, the Padres have done it 10 times, including their first six seasons.

The Dodgers are the only NL team not to finish in the basement since 1969. St. Louis and Houston have done it once apiece.

A Honus Wagner baseball card is considered one of the most attractive collector's items. How much is it worth?

J. O., Toronto, Ontario

A lot. In March hockey star Wayne Gretzky and Bruce McNall, the owner of the Los Angeles Kings, bought a Honus Wagner baseball card for \$451,000, which crushed all records. Bidding for the 1½" × 2½" cardboard card stopped at \$410,000, but Gretzky and McNall paid a 10% commission, which brought the total to \$451,000 at an auction held by Sotheby's in Manhattan.

The card, thought to date to 1910, features a multicolored portrait of Wagner, a Hall-of-Famer who played for the Pittsburgh Pirates. On the back it advertises Piedmont cigarettes. Wagner disapproved of smoking and thought "the association projected a poor image." So he asked that his card be withdrawn from cigarette packs, and few were circulated.

When did the Senior PGA Tour start, and who won the first tournament?

P. K., Concord, N.H.

The Senior PGA Tour started in 1980 with two events. The one at Atlantic City was won by Don January. The other, in Melbourne, Fla., was taken by Charlie Sifford.

The tour had five events the next year and 11 in 1982. This year, there are 42 events, worth \$24 million in total prize money.



The Flying Dutchman snuffed out any association with cigarettes.

Mats Wilander went from a No. 1 ranking in tennis to nowhere. How far did he fall?

J. J., St. Louis

Through the Lipton International, Wilander had fallen to No. 59. He wasn't even playing on the pro circuit then, instead deciding to tour with his own rock band, named, naturally, Seldon Wilander. Mats played guitar.

How many courses are used for the British Open, and how often is it played at St. Andrews?

G. C., Port Charlotte, Fla.

There are seven courses for the British Open: St. Andrews, Muirfield, Royal Lytham and St. Annes, Royal St. George's, Royal Troon, Royal Birkdale, and Turnberry. Thus, the tournament is held at St. Andrews every seven years.

I've never understood the American League curfew rule. Please explain it to me.

P. U., Los Angeles

All night games must be called at 1 a.m. local time. However, if an inning is started prior to 1 a.m., it can be completed. Curfews are

waived for the final series of the season in each of the two parks of two contesting teams.

I know the Jackie Robinson Award goes to the National League's rookie of the year. What players receive the Lou Brock Award and the Mel Ott Award?

C. J., Clinton, Miss.

The Lou Brock Award is given to the leading base-stealer in the National League. Vince Coleman has taken it the last six years. The Mel Ott honor goes to the NL home run leader. Ryne Sandberg won it in 1990 with 40.

Since 1973, when the designated hitter rule came into baseball, in what season have pitchers batted the most times? Has any pitcher hit more than once?

K. K., Orono, Maine

Ironically, it was in 1973, the first year of the DH, that the most pitchers batted, when 11 hurlers went to the plate. "One reason," says Dick Williams, who was managing the Oakland Athletics then, "was we all weren't completely clear on the rule. Some guys got caught, and the pitchers wound up in the lineup." No pitcher has hit twice in a season in the AL since 1983.

Has the All-Star Game ever been held in August? I believe it was in the year of the long baseball strike.

D. B., Howell, N.J.

You're correct. In 1981 the baseball season resumed after the 50-day players' strike with the All-Star Game in Cleveland. The National League won 5-4 on August 9.

In bowling, what is the channel? I've heard it referred to on television tournaments.

D. L., Fremont, Calif.

The channel simply is the gutter. The TV commentators (and the PBA) seem to prefer referring to it as the channel, perhaps feeling gutter belongs with alley—they refer to tournament sites as lanes or centers, never alleys. ■

To uncover obscure sports facts, settle wagers, or unravel confusing trivia, send your questions to: Inside Out, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

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By BOB RUBIN

Has the Humorless NFL Gone Too Far?

DOES NFL MEAN "NO-Fun League"? That question arose in the wake of recommendations to crack down on displays of player emotion, individualism, and even friendship. The recommendations were made by the National Football League's powerful competition committee and were adopted by the owners at their meetings in Hawaii in March. Violators will be subject to penalties or fines.

"The committee is unanimously opposed to any prolonged, excessive, or premeditated celebrations by individual players or groups of players," said the committee report. "Antics such as unrestrained dances, wild flailing of arms and legs, simulated dice games, and similar behavior are deemed to be contrived exhibitionism and have no place in the sport." However, the committee lightened up a tad by adding: "There is no intent here to prohibit normal reactions in emotional situations. . . . Spontaneous expressions of exuberance, such as a quick spike of the ball in the endzone by the scoring player only, are perfectly acceptable."

But if the scoring player hands the ball to a teammate to spike, it's a five-yard penalty. Ditto if he slam dunks it over the goal post. Spinning it like a top? "Not if the action is deemed premeditated," says new NFL supervisor of officials Jerry Seeman.

As if instant replay wasn't enough of a headache, now officials are going to have to figure out what celebration is premeditated and what isn't. How about a spike and a quick two-step? How about a back-flip? How about a pelvis thrust? How about two? Is high



Al Michaels on the Ickey Shuffle: 'It was fun at first, but after a while . . . If he's going to score 15 times, I don't think I'd care to see it 15 times.'

fiving out? How about a high four? Is a penalty for demonstrating reviewable from upstairs?

The NFL is not amused. "The show is on the field," says Jim Finks of the Saints, competition committee chairman. "We are trying to make the games much more professional. I've heard celebrations are popular with fans. They might be with some. They might not be with others. I think we have a responsibility to young people who emulate our athletes."

That's exactly the point, says Falcons coach, showman, and maverick Jerry Glanville. "I tried to tell these guys my nine-year-old son practices dancing in front of the mirror at home after he sees the players do it," Glanville says. "I guess most of these people don't have nine-year-old sons."

Glanville enjoys nothing more than sticking it to the league establishment. "I can see the day coming when we'll have offsetting 15-yard dancing penalties," he says. "Players are going to have to check their dance cards to see what they can do."

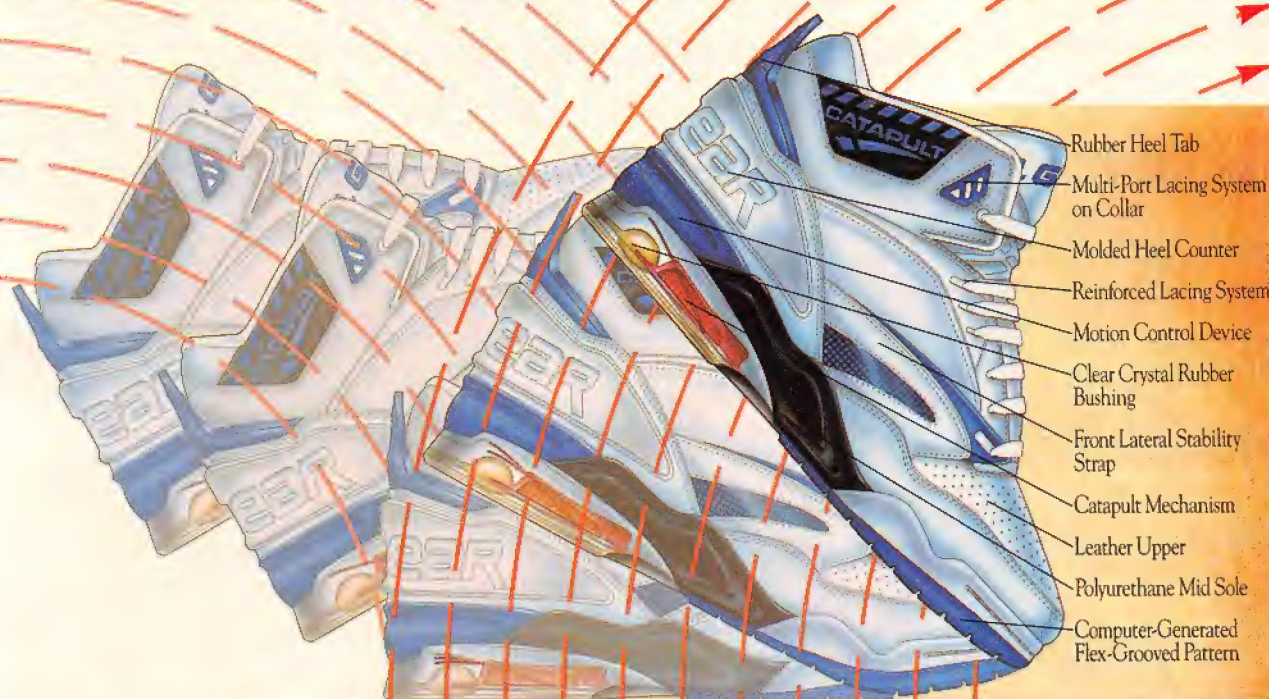
Young Glanville won't be emulating the Ickey Shuffle anymore. It's out, forbidden, banished, *verboten*. (In reply, Bengals coach and apprentice maverick Sam Wyche threatened to show one of Ickey Woods' ungainly touchdown celebration dances on film via the replay screen at Riverfront Stadium.) The Shuffle got shuffled because it's obviously premeditated.

In addition, the competition committee came out against taunting, postgame fraternization, messages on towels or shoes, torn-off jerseys, and spray-painted shoes. Spray-painted faces are also out.

The fraternization rule deals with those impromptu bull sessions between opposing players and coaches that occur immediately after the game. The committee felt they were potentially dangerous, citing as an example the heated exchange between former 49ers safety Ronnie Lott and Giants quarterback Phil Simms after their game last December. "That could have been a disaster," Finks says.

There also was concern about crowd control. Fans poured onto the field in Buffalo after the Bills' division-clinching victory over the Dolphins late last season, which made it difficult for the visitors to reach the safety of their locker room. The committee also wasn't happy about a growing trend for

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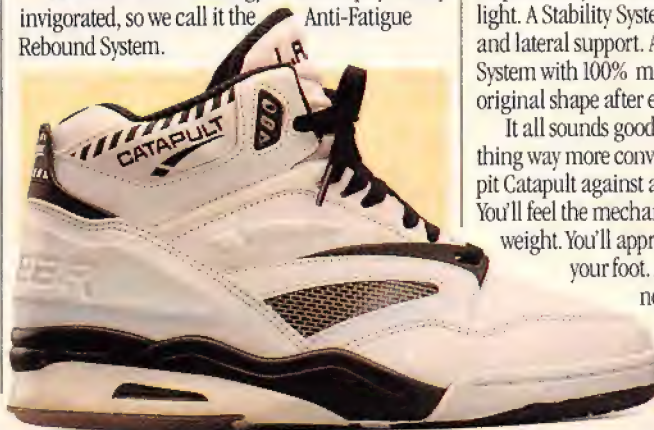
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L.A. GEAR

players from both teams to pray together on the field after a game.

The rule against fraternization has been on the books since 1981 but hardly ever was enforced. "We've been sliding, sliding, sliding to where we have conventions at the center of the field following games," Finks says. "We have trainers, doctors, ball boys, coaches, equipment men out there. This doesn't mean you can't wave to a guy on the other team, but no lingering. You can wave to each other and get out." As long as the wave isn't prolonged, excessive, or premeditated.

Cheap shot, says Dolphins coach and longtime competition committee member Don Shula. "Nobody wants to stop anything that's spontaneous and natural," Shula says. "It's just a question of where you draw the line. It's something we've wrestled with for years. It started with [Mark] Gastineau. Art Shell, a member of the committee, got up and told how he felt when Gastineau did that sack dance against him. We want guys to have fun, but also to act like professionals. Anything construed as taunting or embarrassing we felt was wrong.

"It comes back to how far you want to see it go. What's in good taste and what isn't? We used to have guys get into the endzone and just hand the ball to the officials. Now we've got agents telling guys they've got to do their own thing."

It's hard to find anyone who will defend a wave of the ball in your opponent's face or a defender's dance over the quarterback's limp body, but opinion is divided on post-touchdown celebrations such as the Ickey Shuffle, the simulated craps game the Eagles receivers used to play in the endzone, the high-flying routines of the Redskins' Fun Bunch, and all the other choreography past and present. What's corny and bush to some is harmless fun to others.

One thing is certain: If the big red eye of television wasn't on the players, there would be a whole lot less carrying on. So how do the guys in the booth feel about show biz on the football field and the NFL's attempt to curb it? Like the public, they're divided.

"I think the league's being ridiculous," says Terry Bradshaw of CBS in his usual understated way. "They ought to leave the players alone and stop legislating for the sake of legislating. If a guy comes up with a fancy way to wiggle his behind when he gets in the endzone—hey, it's showtime, it's

creative, it's fun. Let them have a personality. Let them dance."

Bob Costas of NBC was equally understated in his opposition to the NFL Fun Police. "With instant replay, domed stadiums, artificial turf, no-celebration rules, and maniacal attention to how high players wear their socks, you sometimes think the

With instant replay, domed stadiums, artificial turf, and its maniacal attention to how high players wear their socks, you think the NFL would be most pleased if its game could be played by robots.'—Bob Costas

NFL would be most pleased if its game could be played and officiated by robots," Costas says. "Sometimes the NFL is so sanctimonious it's almost laughable."

Hank Stram of CBS enjoys boogying in the endzone, even the elaborate, staged routines featuring a cast of thousands. "What does it last, three or four seconds?" Stram says. "I thought the fans' reaction was good. They laughed and looked forward to it. I never heard anyone boo. Actually, I thought the routines were kind of creative and clever.

"Football's an emotional game. It should be fun. I don't know how the dancing and other stuff hurts the game. I got a kick out of it."

On the other hand . . .

"A lot of the demonstrations used to be fun because they were spontaneous, but somewhere along the line they became contrived, rehearsed, and time consuming," says Al Michaels of ABC. "You still occasionally see one that makes you chuckle, but I think people are worn out watching 95% of them. You'd rather see true shows of emotion than what you can see at your local disco. The games are long enough as it is; if this cuts off a few minutes, fine.

"The Ickey Shuffle? It was fun at first, but after a while . . . If he's going to score 15 times, I don't think I'd care to see it 15 times. That's the problem. Most of this stuff you've seen 100 times, then it gets replayed around the country. Instead of meaningful moments, it's Goofball Sports at 11."

NBC's Marv Albert seconds Michaels' motion. "I understand both sides," he says.

"Some feel the league is taking the flair and fun out of the game, and the demonstrations and celebrations do make for wonderful TV pictures. But I find much of it corny and bush. I'm more for the low-key, the understated. I'm from the Walt Frazier school.

"When I see these antics, I think of the hotshot in school: The one moment he excels, he's got to flaunt it by flexing his muscles. I think it's showing off and showing up."

The third member of the enough-is-enough school is Dick Stockton of CBS. "At first blush, if sports is entertainment, why stop guys from having a personality and exulting?" Stockton says. "I thought the Shuffle was amusing, myself, but the problem is where to draw the line. What is distasteful, mocking, unseemly? I can understand the league's dilemma. If you

say, 'Do it, but do it with taste,' you're asking the impossible.

"The league has to be more conservative than outsiders. It's [its] product, and the overall look is important. Personally, I don't like the wiggling. I used to love it when a guy just flipped the ball over his shoulder, or handed it to an official. I think that's classy."

Pat Summerall and John Madden, the long-running CBS hit, warned against trying to legislate fun out of the game but emphasized the fun had to be spontaneous and natural. To Madden, timing is everything.

"If a guy goes boom! boom! boom! and it's all over with, fine," he says. "But if he has to wait for a whole group to arrive, that's wrong." However, Madden and Summerall part company on the Ickey Shuffle.

"A little excessive," says Summerall.

"I kind of go by what the fans like, and they liked it," says Madden. "Probably the most conservative man in the NFL is Paul Brown, and even he did the Ickey Shuffle the last time the Bengals went to the Super Bowl. If Paul Brown can do it, it can't be all bad.

"We always looked forward to it. I liked that. To me, it was fun."

No more. The Ickey Shuffle is history. The league has become more professional . . . or more boring.

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Talk about a coincidence: Contributing editor BOB RUBIN has been banned by his softball league from moonwalking his way around the bases after he hits a home run.

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By EDWARD KIERSH

Bruce Smith

On the Bills: 'Let's face it: We're ignored. We get no respect'
On the NFC: 'Superior league my ass. I'm so tired of that crap'
On his goals: 'To be the highest paid defensive player in the NFL'

LOCATING THE MEANEST, BADDEST, strongest, cockiest defensive player in the National Football League isn't easy. First a knock on a New York City hotel door. Nothing happens. Then another series of hard raps. Again, nothing.

Over the hotel phone, just a few minutes ago, the Buffalo Bills' Bruce Smith gave *INSIDE SPORTS* this room number and said come on up. Is he giving us the slip the way he brushed past opposing blockers to amass 19 sacks? That doesn't seem likely—Smith likes to talk, to rave on about himself and his newly powerful mates—so the mystery of his disappearance deepens.

Another knock. Finally a voice (later identified as belonging to lightweight boxing champ Pernell Whitaker, Smith's good buddy) yells out, "Let me sleep. He's down the hall."

A short trot down the hall and some more pounding, and sure enough, the heir apparent to LT and Mean Joe Greene, the self-crowned king of the trenches himself, appears. Roused from his bed, wearing only a pair of Bills warm-up shorts, Smith flings the door open and then crawls back under the covers.

In a few minutes, however, the perennial Pro Bowl player (four consecutive seasons now) revives himself and props his mountainous 6'4", 280-pound frame against a few pillows. He gamely tries to smile, but it soon becomes obvious that Smith is still hurting. The pain of losing the big one, the Super Bowl, won't go away. "I can't even get myself to look at the tape [of the game]," he says. "I don't think I ever will. I just didn't do it."

In that game Smith sacked the New York Giants quarterback, Jeff Hostetler, in the endzone, but that was about it for his heroics. Though most observers agree that Smith has surpassed Lawrence Taylor as the

game's most dominant defensive force, Bruce didn't show America his best stuff in the Super Bowl. He was virtually invisible.

Smith has been highly visible since he hit Buffalo in 1985. After his All-America career at Virginia Tech, where he won the '85 Outland Trophy as the nation's best lineman, the Bills made him the No. 1 pick in the NFL draft later that year. Smith paid off with high-profile production: He led the Bills in sacks, was named AFC defensive rookie of the year, and even lined up at fullback a few times (Bills fans still talk about a block that leveled two Chargers linebackers and opened a hole for a Buffalo touchdown). He's Buffalo's all-time leader in sacks with 76½, and he's as vocal as he is devastating.

INSIDE SPORTS: You mentioned you're still hurting from the Super Bowl. How bad does it get?

BRUCE SMITH: Losing really was like dying. In the business I'm in we're not paid to lose. We had a great season, the best in Bills history, but we've got to go on. That loss will stay with me for a long time. It hurts, a lot. I think it'll be like that for the rest of my life. Really, forever.

IS: After Scott Norwood put the ball up, what was in your mind?

BS: It sounded like a cannon. Yeah. I was so 100% sure he was going to make it. I watched it all the way. Words can't explain how bad I felt. After all the 2-14 seasons, we had finally gotten to the big one. People weren't coming to our games with bags on their heads anymore. But I'm not blaming Norwood. We should have had the game put away.

IS: What is it—the money, the glory that you lost out on?

BS: The money is definitely part of it, of course. Of course. But I'd also like to be walking around with a Super Bowl ring on

my finger. Yet, that money is sweet too. I love to buy things.

IS: What about the glory part?

BS: I'm here for that. But I know the Bills are the best.

IS: What do you mean?

BS: I mean the Bills are the team of the 1990s. There's no denying that. Look around—we are the best. Thurman Thomas, Jim Kelly, Cornelius Bennett, Darryl Talley . . . I could go on and on. We have the best talent in the league. We have much better talent than the Giants.

IS: So why did you lose the Super Bowl?

BS: Good point! We lost, I'm not blaming Norwood. I'm not blaming it on anyone else. We lost.

IS: Did someone not do their job that day?

BS: The true champion looks to himself first. Maybe I didn't do my job. When you lose you should always look at yourself first.

IS: Do you feel you should have knocked the ball out of Jeff Hostetler's hands and scored a touchdown instead of a safety?

BS: [He laughs.] That lucky—Yeah, that was a very big play. I should have knocked it out. It was a turning point. My friends on the offense should have come back and scored. They didn't. They didn't.

IS: Are you suggesting they didn't do their job?

BS: I'm not going to say anything more about this. I'll only say the defense was on the field too much. We didn't stop the Giants the way we should have. That was due to Hostetler's scrambling.

IS: Did he surprise you?

BS: I knew he was talented and gutsy. He's a real competitor. I knocked him out when we were playing against him in West Virginia, but three plays later he came back. I know he's one tough SOB.

IS: Did any Giant surprise you?



BS: Yeah, Dave Meggett. He blocked me one time, he knocked the ----- out of me. I said, "Gad dag, how many people are they going to put on me? I'm a man and a half, but hell, how many guys do I have to take on?" Meggett's got heart. He's not afraid to dish it out and take some blows. I have a lot of respect for him.

IS: What about Jumbo Elliott? He did a number on you as well.

BS: He's good.

IS: Is that all you can say? He led the blocking for numerous running plays in that game and obliterated you many times.

BS: I said he's good, but look: No one person can stop me. [Giants coach Bill] Parcells had a lot of guys on me. One guy can't do the job. No way.

IS: But if you're so good, why did Elliott dominate you?

BS: OK. I'm not going to get upset. I'm not going to get angry, but look: I scored two points. Defensive players don't usually score points. I'll leave it at that.

IS: Do you really feel you showed America your true talents?

BS: I think I did a good job, but I can always do better. I had a good game, but good doesn't satisfy me. I could've done a few more things that changed the outcome of that game. Still, we were in it to the end and should've won.

IS: You beat up on the Raiders 51-3. Were the Bills overconfident going into the Super Bowl?

BS: Maybe we were. Maybe we did feel we could beat anybody. Look, we are the team of the 1990s. I've said that, and I still believe it.

IS: Could it be that the Giants had more to prove than the Bills?

BS: Forget it. That's not the reason. Their coaches, though, did do a great job. Their players also executed. But we still should have beaten them. We're the much better team. I don't care if we played against Simms, Hostetler, Randall Cunningham, John Elway—we are the best. The whole world knows that.

IS: Do the Bills have to improve in any one area to be back in the Super Bowl?

BS: We already have the right combination to win. We don't need a thing.

IS: Can the AFC beat the NFC?

BS: That question angers me every time I hear it. Hell, I'm tired of that crap. Every time we play the NFC something new comes up. I'm so tired of this . . . Superior league my ass.

IS: But the AFC still hasn't—

BS: Are you trying to piss me off? It's not my fault the conference hasn't won recently. I only know the Bills are better than the Giants. I should have knocked the ball out of Hostetler's hands. I should have.



'I like performing for the fans. I'm like a gladiator without any fear.'

IS: You've complained in the past that the Bills can't get any respect. Why not?

BS: There are so many great talents in Buffalo. If we were somewhere else—L.A., New York—then we would get the respect we deserve. So many of our guys are underrated. Talley is the most overlooked player in the league. And Thomas, he should be compared to Barry Sanders. Let's face it: We're ignored. There are a lot of overrated guys in this league who get all of the coverage. We get none. We get no respect.

IS: Is this due to your being in Buffalo?

BS: I can't talk bad about Buffalo. The people have been great, even if they used to wear bags on their heads to games. I would wear a bag, too—we used to be lousy. But these fans have stuck by us.

IS: Would you like to play in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles?

BS: Hey, don't get me going. I know Buffalo isn't exactly the center of media and that I might lose some endorsements, but that's not all there is to this business. Besides, if I was in New York, I'd be a broke man now. My wife likes to shop.

IS: But you still talk about not getting enough attention.

BS: Let's leave it at that. The fans are wonderful. They're always coming up to me, and I like that. Maybe I'm the big fish in a

small pond. Yet, I do want that respect. I deserve it. My parents spoiled me. Not with money, but with real necessities. My father was always encouraging me, and he was there for me.

IS: Do you have any fear?

BS: None. None at all.

IS: You never worry about winding up on crutches like Bo Jackson, or being at the end of the line after some injury?

BS: Never. I told you, I have no fear. I can't think about stuff like that. I'm like a gladiator. I like performing for my wife and all the fans in the world. In the *world*. I don't like picking up a paycheck if I don't perform. No. I don't like that. I'm a gladiator without any fear.

IS: Muhammad Ali once said he was the greatest—

BS: I'm bad too. I'm real bad.

IS: Ali got a lot of flack for those comments. America doesn't like it when athletes call too much attention to themselves, or call themselves the greatest.

BS: I *am* the greatest.

IS: Why do you keep announcing that? If you're so good, why do you have to keep saying it?

BS: I'm bad and I'm tough. If I said it just in Buffalo, who would have heard me?

IS: So you felt you had to come to New York



"I go roaring into the lot and bang!

I get hit with: '75 cents for each 20

minutes.' Unfortunately, I was going

to have to eat it. Showing up late for this job interview

could blow the whole deal.

So I grabbed the

ticket and pulled

into a space.

And then

I pulled out and

backed it in.

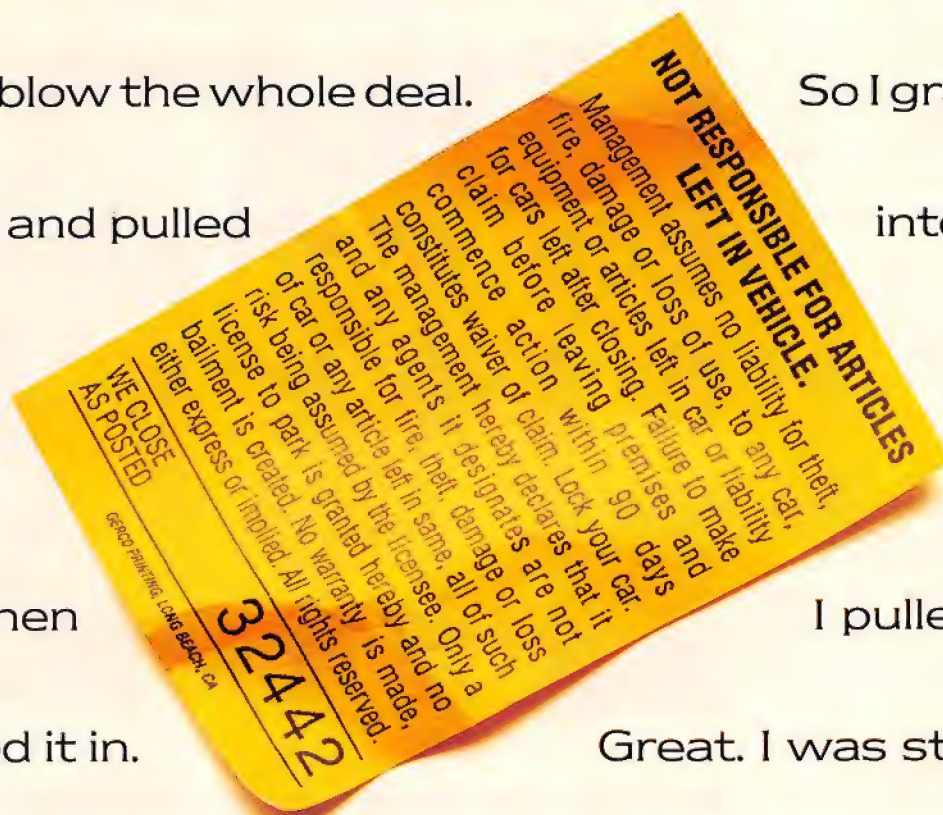
Great. I was starting to

freak. I checked my hair. 'Fine.' My teeth. 'Okay.' My tie. 'Too

late now.' As I looked down I suddenly spotted it.

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ARTICLES

LEFT IN VEHICLE. I laughed."



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PIONEER
The Art of Entertainment

during the season and announce it to the world?

BS: Hey, it was the right time and the right place. I had to say it. Some of my own teammates wanted me to say it.

IS: But you still haven't told me why you had to say it.

BS: Why? I wanted respect. That's the only reason. I'm the best, and yet I'm still not treated as the best. Other players treat me with respect, but that's as far as it goes. These players know my talents; that's why I'm double- and triple-teamed. That's a real sign of respect. But I want more respect from the media.

IS: Do you feel respect is measured by the number of media clips you receive?

BS: That's part of it. I want that, and I'm going to get it.

IS: I still don't hear too many guys telling the world they are the "best."

BS: Not too many guys can, but I can. There just aren't too many Bruce Smiths. There just aren't too many talented guys like me around.

IS: Yes, but very few athletes sound their own horn.

BS: Freedom of speech. That's what this country is all about. It's great to be living in America. I said it, and I'm through with it.

IS: Why is it so important to you to be hailed as the "best"?

BS: I love walking down the street, and hearing people say, "That's Bruce Smith. He's the best defensive player in football." I get a kick out of that. I've worked for it, and it's exciting. I don't want to be walking down the street and hear those people say, "There's Bruce Smith. He's the second best player in the league." No, no, no. I don't want that. I want to be No. 1. *No. 1.*

IS: So you're better than Lawrence Taylor?

BS: Look, we're good friends.

IS: I'm sure you are, but are you better?

BS: I am. I'm the greatest.

IS: What about Reggie White? Compare yourself to him.

BS: I'm the best!

IS: Compare your talents and those of Richard Dent.

BS: He's great, but I'm the best. No one is faster than I am. I'm going to keep coming at people; no one's going to hit me. I'm going to hit them.

IS: White and Dent have done their thing for years. Where do you—

BS: Let's talk about what White has. He has great defensive talent around him, as do I, but I really feel for pass-rushing that four down linemen are better than three [the Eagles use a 4-3 defense; Buffalo uses a 3-4]. But I'm still happy with the system I'm in. That's the bottom line.

IS: What about Derrick Thomas?

BS: I'm going to spell it out for you one last

time. There's no one better; I'm the best in the league. Let's leave it now.

IS: I understand you're only saying you're the best now, not the best ever.

BS: I'm not comparing myself to what LT has done over the years. He's a legend. I only know what I have today. That could be gone tomorrow. Lawrence is unbelievable. He's the greatest in history. I wouldn't compare myself to what he's done over and over again.

IS: You're going to make \$1.4 million this coming year, yet Chris Doleman and Reggie White will both make more than you. If you're the best, why aren't you being recognized as the best salarywise?

BS: I can't talk about that. No. I just can't.

IS: After you said you were the best, your

BS: No, no. I mean, this first started happening with my watching films. I see two, three guys on me, and sometimes they might even stick a fourth guy there, so that starts to get to me. I'm pissed off. I have to assert myself. I watch the film, and ask myself, "Why are they doing this? It must be because I'm a power." I figured it out. It must be a sign of respect. But it still pisses me off.

IS: In the Bills defensive system, do you have enough freedom? Can you free-lance?

BS: They give us the freedom to do what we want. That isn't true on most teams, so I feel very fortunate. I'm happy in Buffalo—make sure you print that. We went through a lot of tough years, and we didn't have that freedom. But we're there now.



Search and destroy: 'We know what has to be done, and we'll do it.'

sacks started to drop off. What happened?

BS: Why do you think they did? People just put more emphasis on me after I said that. There was more coverage. I knew that was going to happen, but I still got more than 100 tackles and 19 sacks. Come on, defensive players just don't put those kind of numbers together. I got both. But what's important now is that the 1990 season is behind me. We have to forget about those great numbers. I have to do more. I have to get closer to my peak output. My goal is to be the highest paid player—defensive player—in the league. To do that I have to continue to show I'm the best on the field. So I'm going to do whatever it takes to be that dominating force again, to lead the Bills to another great season, to boost my buddies on the field to even greater heights.

IS: Have you always felt this urge?

IS: How bad were those initial years with the Bills?

BS: Very bad. When we were 2-14, it was bad. I'm not used to losing: 4-12, 7-8, those years were painful. Seeing fans with bags over their heads isn't something a player, at least a guy who respects himself, wants to see. I'm glad it's over.

IS: Describe Walt Corey as a defensive coordinator.

BS: He's excellent. I like his style. I've had so many coaches, but he stands out. He's a great person, great. I feel really close to him. I've walked into his office and told him that I wanted to be the best player in the league. I told him this a year ago. When he looked into my eyes, he knew I was serious. From there on, we took every step that we possibly could.

My being the best comes with prepara-

tion and the freedom to do my thing. The coaching staff has given me this freedom. Plus they've stood behind me. I'm not going to bad-mouth these guys; they're excellent. And this year we'll go even further. I know that. I'm working very hard during this offseason.

IS: How do you stay in shape?

BS: I'm fishing and playing golf [*he laughs heartily*].

IS: Do you burn up the course?

BS: Well, I hit them. I hit 'em, that's all I can say. I do like golf, but there's one place I'm not as good as LT.

IS: You like the game?

BS: Yeah, but it also gets me angry. I love challenges, and golf is certainly a challenge. Every hole is a challenge. And I'm also the underdog. I like it that way. The winning is even sweeter.

IS: We talked about Corey. What do you think of [Bills coach] Marv Levy?

BS: He's a good coach. He amuses everyone on that team. We bring dictionaries to our meetings because he's so articulate. He comes up with these words we never heard of. We like playing for him, and everyone is pretty loose.

IS: Who are you closest to on the team?

BS: Talley. With him there's never a dull moment. Never. We hang out together, and he's a better golfer than I am. But he's not getting the recognition, either. None of the Bills are getting the attention they deserve. That has to change.

IS: How will the Bills avoid a letdown this season?

BS: The Bills, like I said, are on a mission. We will not fall short. We will win the Super Bowl. We will show people once and for all that we are the best team in the league.

IS: Is that "mission" just to get back to the Super Bowl?

BS: Getting back to the show is the most important thing. We're also going to win it.

IS: Explain why the Bills are the team of the '90s.

BS: Look around. We're the youngest team in the league. We have a lot—a lot—of talent. Being in the show wasn't good enough for us. We are the dominant force in the league now. We are No. 1. There's no doubt about that.

IS: After the Super Bowl, did you guys get together to—

BS: We're always together. We didn't have to have any meeting to pick up our spirits or anything like that. We know what has to be done, and we're going to get it done. We are for real. Last year was no one-time thing. The 1990s are our time. Our time.

IS: Have you had any idols over the years?

BS: Julius Erving and my father. Julius is the first celebrity I ever met. He came to my elementary school when I was small. I al-

ways followed him after that, and later on, I told him. He said, "Bruce, you were never small."

I admired my father because he was a hard worker at the minimum wage. He worked 10 to 12 hours a day, and yet he'd always find the time to watch me play sports. He was always there for me. I love my dad deeply; he's the greatest. I owe a lot to him. Everything.

IS: Do you have any idols in football?

BS: Mean Joe Greene. He had great character. All the guys who risk their bodies out on a football field have character—it takes a special kind of man to play this game—but Joe is one of a kind. He got those Super Bowl rings, and that's all I care about.

IS: Then you must be awfully upset these days, not having won at the show.

BS: We lost. I was very pissed off, very much. My father told me not to be angry at Norwood, and he's right. I have to look at myself. My anger leads me to feel I can get better, that I can do more for the Bills. I just don't take losing too easily. But even if we didn't lose, and they put two, three guys on me, and somehow I don't make a statement in those games, it gets me very angry. I guess that's the person I am. I have to win. That's why I'm playing. I have to be the best. And when I really get that recognition, I expect the money to be there as well.

IS: So you feel underpaid?

BS: Of course!

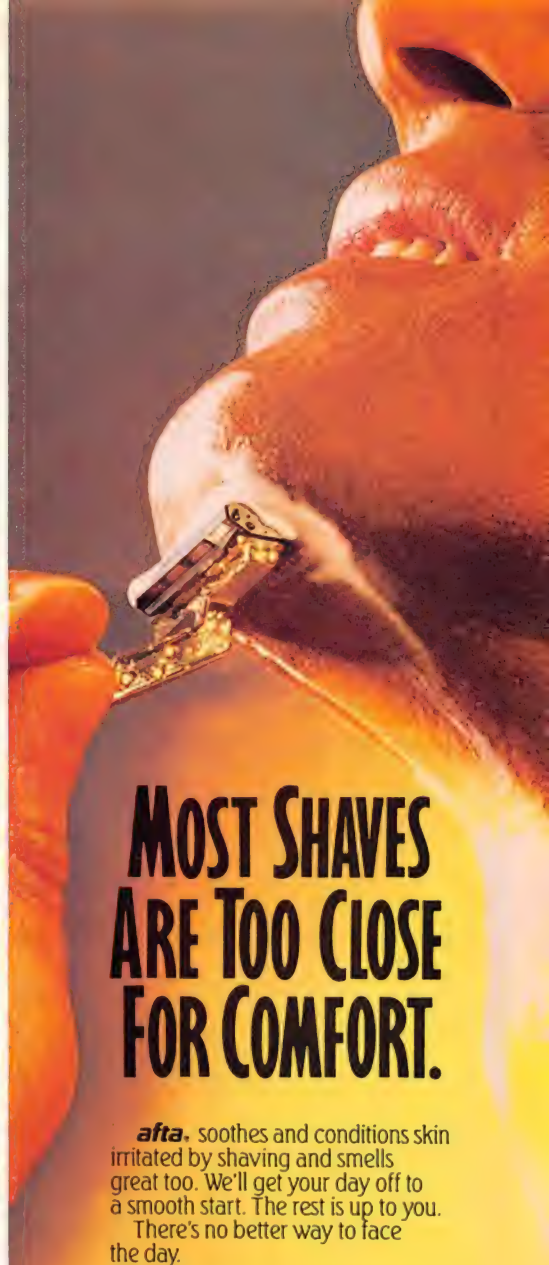
IS: Are you happy?

BS: Yeah, but I could be happier after I'm paid as the best in the league. Being paid second or third is not good enough. I play to win, to make the Bills the best—and I expect to be paid accordingly. I have to make the most money in the league because I'm the best. I don't want one without the other. That's the American way.

IS: Why is it also so important to you for the Bills to be recognized as the team of the 1990s?

BS: This is our decade. It's ours. We want to go down in history with the other great teams, the Packers, the Steelers, the Raiders. We're a little like the old Raiders, and I have a lot of respect for Al Davis. But most importantly, I want my kids 20 years from now to see my name in the record books, to see the names of Talley and Thomas and the other guys. The Bills want to make history. We want to set the stage. We want to accomplish a lot after so many bad seasons. Winning isn't just one thing: It's the only thing. We are on a mission. ■

Last month Giants coach Bill Parcells, this month Smith—EDWARD KIERSH has interviewed people from both sidelines in Super Bowl XXV, and both men agree: Each of them was on the best team in the game.



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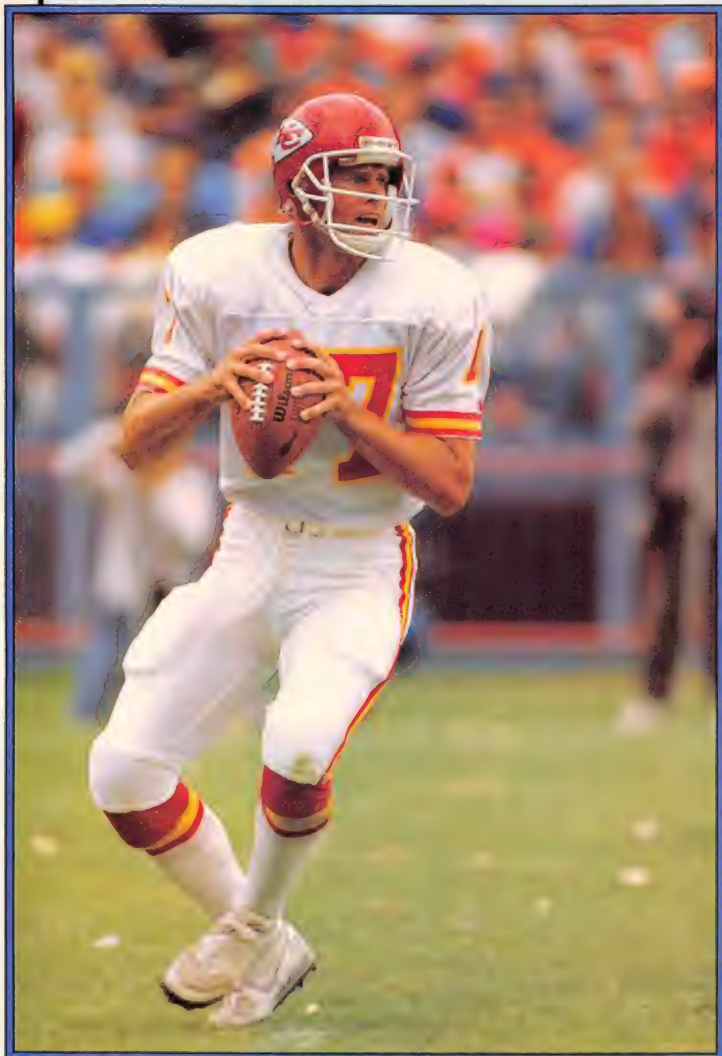


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**NOTHING FEELS
BETTER. AFTA.**

by **MENNEN**

FOOTBALL



Our AFC Picks:

*The young Chiefs,
led by veteran
Steve DeBerg,
will upset Buffalo
in the AFC title
game and charge
to their first
Super Bowl battle
in two decades*

By GARY MYERS



PREVIEW



Our NFC Picks:
The Giants will grind it out behind the power rushing of Rodney Hampton, through the NFC and all the way to their second straight Super Bowl title

By GREG GARBER

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

AFC EAST

Buffalo's big edge in talent will be enough for another division crown.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Buffalo Bills12-4
2. Indianapolis Colts9-7
3. Miami Dolphins9-7
4. New York Jets6-10
5. New England Patriots4-12

BUFFALO BILLS

JIM KELLY AND THE NO-HUDDLE PRODUCE more touchdowns than minutes, and the Bills win another AFC East title. . . . Bruce Smith boo-boos by saying he's better

division than any other. The Bills are just too powerful with too many weapons. They racked up 95 playoff points on the Dolphins and Raiders before the Giants played slow-down in the Super Bowl. The big question, of course, is whether the crushing 20-19 Super Bowl loss will prove to be an emotional barrier or a springboard. Would it have been better for the Bills to get blown out of the Super Bowl? It's just so hard to get psyched up again after coming so close and falling short. Marv Levy must keep the Bills focused.

STRENGTHS: The offensive arsenal is scary. Thurman Thomas is the best all-around back in the league. If Everson Walls hadn't brought him down on that final Super Bowl drive, Thomas would have gone 80 yards for the winning touchdown. Kelly has so much to choose from: Thomas, Reed, James Lofton, Kenneth Davis. Levy really only trotted out the no-huddle full-time late in the year. Maybe teams can go to school on what the Giants did, but how many offenses can play keep-away for 40 minutes, and how

declaring he was the greatest defensive player ever known to man. Conlan might be the steadiest of the three. Overall, the Bills defense can be ambushed. Miami put up 34 on them in the playoffs, and then the Giants—with old man Ottis Anderson rushing for more than 100 yards—wore them out in the second half. Some Bills players even asked the Giants offensive linemen, "Aren't you guys getting tired?"

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Leon Seals. He gets overshadowed by Smith, but he's a prime-time player. His big-time hit on Jeff Hostetler almost KO'd the QB, and he ended Phil Simms' season one month earlier.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Bennett. He broke into the NFL by prompting comparisons to Lawrence Taylor and had 18 sacks in his first 24 games, but he has just 9½ in his last 28 and only four last year.

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

JEFF GEORGE TURNS INTO THE NEW Dan Marino and makes the Pro Bowl. . . . Bulletin: Eric Dickerson does not ask to renegotiate his contract and runs for 1,300 yards. . . . Jimmy Irsay does not make a big trade, and even more out of character, the Colts make the playoffs.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH SECOND: All you had to do was watch George toward the end of the season to realize the Colts made a great trade getting him. He stayed in the pocket and took his lumps but made his plays, too. Now, how far can he take his team? As long as Dickerson continues to believe Indy is the place for him, the Colts definitely can make the playoffs. Having Dickerson around healthy in body and mind for a full season will take tremendous pressure off George.

STRENGTHS: Franchise quarterbacks are impossible to find. That's why when a club is foolish enough to trade one—right, Jerry Glanville?—the price is pretty steep. But picking up George for a No. 1 and Andre Rison and Chris Hinton was a steal. George's 16-to-13 touchdown-to-interception ratio was amazing for a rookie.

WEAKNESSES: The Colts can use a dependable deep threat. The Colts' top receiver was running back Albert Bentley, who caught 71 passes. The Colts also need to stop some people. They were No. 26 in defense and gave up almost six more points a game than Buffalo. Catching the Bills in every department must be Indy's goal.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Billy Brooks. OK, we know he's been in the league five years, but now that he has a legitimate quarterback throwing him the ball he's ready to emerge as one of the best receivers in the AFC.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Chip Banks. He once was one of those players considered to be the next LT, but a variety of off-the-field problems clearly has eroded his skills.



Reed [83] won't lose his head over last season's disappointing ending.

until December. . . . Andre Reed spends the season looking over his shoulder for the Giants' Myron Guyton to lay another big hit on him.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIRST: The gap between No. 1 and No. 2 is wider in this

many teams have the personnel to play the Giants' defensive scheme?

WEAKNESSES: Smith, Cornelius Bennett, and Shane Conlan can be pushed around. The word late in the year: Run on Bennett. Smith went one month without a sack after

MIAMI DOLPHINS

DAN MARINO REALIZES WLAF broadcasting isn't his gig and signs a long-term extension. . . . Richmond Webb gets proclaimed as the greatest lineman of all time after holding Bruce Smith without a sack. . . . Don Shula gets more involved with the defense after last season's 44-point disaster in Buffalo.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH THIRD: Shula tried very hard to transform the Dolphins into an NFC team. He junked the guns-away approach that helped Marino set so many records—Dan's 48 touchdown passes in '84 won't ever be duplicated—and went more to a running game and emphasized stronger defense. It worked for most of the year, but then they got blown away by the Bills in the playoffs. Every weakness was exposed by Buffalo; the league will pick up on that this season and continue to exploit Louis Oliver on passing downs, run up the middle like Thurman Thomas, and across the middle like Andre Reed. The running game? After a quick start Miami finished No. 22, and Sammie Smith tailed off and had only 831 yards.



A change of direction for Dickerson will kick the Colts running game into gear.

STRENGTHS: The name is Marino, still the quickest gun in the NFL. Shula turned him

into a ball-control quarterback, and while you can't argue with 12 victories, 21 touchdowns from Danny Boy is ridiculous. It's not like Shula has Barry Sanders in the backfield. It's a waste to have Marino and not use him, but after all those years of throwing bombs and coming up short in those 38-34 games, Marino didn't complain too much last year because Miami was winning.

WEAKNESSES: Just look at the defense in that Buffalo playoff game: 44 points, 493 yards, 339 in the air. In its two playoff games Miami gave up 860 yards—and this after a regular season in which the Dolphins improved to No. 7 defensively. Shula says Miami must put more pressure on the quarterback—only one playoff sack—and get better coverage in the secondary. Moving Oliver up from safety to play man-to-man against the Bills was disastrous.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Richmond Webb. He made the Pro Bowl on his first try, and his fellow rookie, guard Keith Sims, wasn't far behind. Together they form a 601-pound wall on the left side of the line for Marino. They should be an All-Pro tandem for a lot of years.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Since the Marks Brothers have always been grouped together, we'll put Mark Duper and Mark Clayton in this category together. Clayton's catches and touchdowns have decreased the

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

last two years, and Duper hasn't been over 1,000 yards since 1986.

NEW YORK JETS

BRUCE COSLET FINALLY LEARNS that New York is not Cincinnati and his Sam Wyche act doesn't work in the big town. . .

WEAKNESSES: Four of the six quarterbacks taken in the first round of the '83 draft have guided their team to the Super Bowl. None of them won, but at least they got there. Kansas City's Todd Blackledge never made it; neither did O'Brien. The funny thing about the Jets quarterback controversy last summer between O'Brien and Tony Eason: This was a competition to determine the lesser of two evils.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Thomas. We didn't see the best of him last year. A long holdout,

players, and there just aren't enough Patriots who could make any other NFL team. **STRENGTHS:** Finally, the Patsies are strong at the top. Hiring Sam Jankovich to run the show may be the only sensible thing Kiam has done. Jankovich is a topnotch administrator. If he can't fix the team's serious image problem—well, it just can't be done. Dick MacPherson may not have been the best choice to rebuild, but he made sense for this team. He's a native New Englander, he's enthusiastic, and he's well-respected. Those



Sammie Smith and the Dolphins' 22nd-ranked ground attack will again get snowed under by the Bills.

Browning Nagle replaces the human statue, Ken O'Brien, at quarterback by midseason. . . Al Toon and Rob Moore emerge as the most lethal duo this side of Jerry Rice and John Taylor.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FOURTH: Dick Steinberg needs one more draft to turn this thing around. He's provided Coslet with enough offensive weapons, including Moore and running back Blair Thomas, and now he needs to fill in some huge holes on defense. Quick quiz: Name a Jets linebacker.

STRENGTHS: Steinberg gave up what turned out to be the eighth pick in this year's draft to take Moore in last year's supplemental phase. Good move? You bet it was. Moore might have been the first receiver picked in this draft. In addition, Moore (44 catches and six touchdowns) and Toon (57 catches and six touchdowns in an injury-plagued season) are a pretty fair tandem.

nagging muscle pulls, and Coslet's doghouse took their tolls. This guy can play, but now he must learn to play hurt. He's a 1,200-yard runner if he stays on the field.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Erik McMillan. The former Pro Bowl safety had an off-year, but he was learning a new defense. The Jets really don't have any other players who have been up, so it's tough to find one going down.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

VICTOR KIAM SAYS ONLY 50 STUPID things that cause him to issue an apology. . . The Pats set an NFL record for women in the locker room. . . And they win four games.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIFTH: Because they are the worst team in football—and that might include the World League. It gets down to this: You can win without great coaching, but you can't win without great

are three things generally lacking for a Patriots coach.

WEAKNESSES: Kiam is the most misunderstood owner in the NFL, and for good reason: He's hard to understand. He has made a fool of himself in a very short period of time. Anyway, the Pats' weaknesses run wide, far, and deep, but none is worse than quarterback, where MacPherson has Tommy Hodson and Hugh Millen. Ugh.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Yes, they have one: Tight end Marv Cook. He had 51 catches and five touchdowns last year, which isn't easy on a team without a quarterback.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: John Stephens. Has anybody seen him the last couple of years? He's strictly an 800-yard back now after showing signs earlier in his career that he was going to be one of the elite. Stephens always seems to be hurt, too. New England has been trying to trade him for two years.

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AFC CENTRAL

The tough Steelers defense will be the difference in a tight race.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Pittsburgh Steelers9-7
2. Houston Oilers9-7
3. Cincinnati Bengals8-8
4. Cleveland Browns5-11

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

BUBBY BRISTER STOPS COMPLAINING about Joe Walton's offense and gets the Steelers into the endzone before the fifth game of the season. . . . Chuck Noll gives in and lets Rod Woodson play some wide receiver. . . . Terry Bradshaw goes the entire season without ripping the Steelers.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIRST: The offense may have been pathetic last season, but it's still defense that wins—and despite the dog performance in the final game of the season in Houston that kept the Steelers out of the playoffs, their defense will get them the division title. It was ranked No. 1 in the league last season. The Steelers were No. 1 against the pass and gave up a league-low nine touchdown passes.

STRENGTHS: Let's continue looking at that secondary. Woodson is the best corner in the league. He's joined back there by David Johnson, Carnell Lake, and Thomas Everett. This gang of four came through with the help of only 34 sacks. Usually teams that don't put pressure the quarterback pay for it with lots of touchdown passes. In the last two seasons, the Steelers have only 65 sacks.

WEAKNESSES: It's hard to imagine, but the Steelers offense didn't score a touchdown until Week 5. Then Brister finally got with Walton's program. Now the Steelers weren't a scoring machine, mind you, but they put up only 44 fewer points than Miami, which has Dan Marino. The Pittsburgh defense is good enough to carry Brister, but he's got to give it a chance by doing better than getting the Steelers offense into the endzone 31 times. Brister completed 57.6% of his passes and had an 81.6 rating—nice numbers to build off. He must take his game to the next level for the Steelers to win this thing.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Tight end Eric Green. Green held out all of training camp, and Noll forgot about him. Then the kid showed up



Brister should see the endzone a lot better with a year under his belt.

and had a big impact. He had 34 catches, seven for touchdowns. At 6'5", 274, he's bigger than any building in downtown Pittsburgh.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Tim Worley. He just doesn't seem to fit. After a rocky rookie year he was expected to have a huge second year, but nagging injuries left him with only 418 rushing yards and no touchdowns.

HOUSTON OILERS

WARREN MOON PASSES FOR 5,000 yards, but the Oilers still don't win the division. . . . Houston gives up only 40 points when it loses in Cincinnati this season. . . . The players continue to talk about how nice it is that Jerry Glanville is in Atlanta.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH SECOND: The Oilers were fun to watch last year. Moon had a season that quarterbacks only dream about, basically throwing on every down. Just look

at those numbers: 4,689 yards, 33 touchdowns, and 527 yards in one game vs. Kansas City, which has the best secondary in the NFL. However, Houston had to struggle to make it in as the third wild-card team. Never has so much talent done so little.

STRENGTHS: The Lions may have gotten all the publicity last year with Mouse Davis and the run-and-shoot, but the Oilers showed everybody how to run it, scoring 405 points, second in the league to Buffalo. Haywood Jeffries and Drew Hill tied for the AFC lead with 74 catches, and Ernest Givins was fourth with 72. Together, they covered 3,046 yards. However, the Oilers need to diversify a bit and establish a running game. They cut Mike Rozier and traded Alonzo Highsmith, leaving Lorenzo White as the No. 1 back. He had 702 yards, but when the field got short, the run-and-shoot bogged



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down with no blocking fullback or tight end. **WEAKNESSES:** Jack Pardee made vast improvements in the defense. First, he added a little discipline, which was nonexistent in the Glanville regime. The Oilers went from giving up 412 points, No. 26 in 1989, to 307 last year, which was No. 14. Not great, not terrible. But it was still 67 more points than Pittsburgh, and that has to be the goal.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: White. Now that Highsmith and Rozier are gone, it's time for White to show why he was a No. 1 pick.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Punter Greg Montgomery—but only because of a lack of action. His 45.0 gross was No. 1 in the NFL last season, but the proficiency of the run-and-shoot limited him to only 34 punts. He didn't qualify for the league leaders because you need a minimum of 40 punts. That leg is getting rusty.

CINCINNATI BENGALS

SAM WYCHE DONATES ANOTHER \$27,000 to Paul Tagliabue when he finds another way to tick off the commish. . . . Boomer Esiason pumps up and airs out with 30 touchdown passes as Wyche returns the offense to the quarterback. . . . Ikey can't do the Shuffle in the endzone or the sidelines, so, after he scores, he goes into the stands.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH THIRD: Wyche is on some sort of an anti-management crusade, and he has become a huge distraction to his team. Last year's incident, in which Wyche banned a female reporter from his locker room, created more of a stir than anything that happened to his team on the field. The Bengals are still loaded with talent, specifically on offense, but Wyche seemed to de-emphasize Esiason last year and rely more on the running game. We've always questioned his judgment.

STRENGTHS: Esiason struggled through the season—24 touchdowns and 22 interceptions and only a 77.0 rating—but it's obvious that the Bengals passing game, which ranked an uncharacteristic 15th last year, is still the only way Cincinnati can do major business in the playoffs. James Brooks is 32 years old, and Woods is simply a goal-line runner now after his knee surgery. The passing game with Eddie Brown, Tim McGee, and Rodney Holman is where the firepower is. Still, they combined for only 127 catches and 15 touchdowns last year in Wyche's offense.

WEAKNESSES: Pass the word: Pass on the Bengals. That was the deal in Cincy, at least until cornerback Eric Thomas returned from knee surgery. Despite the presence of

All-Pro safety David Fulcher, the Bengals were easy to throw on in '90. They gave up 24 touchdown passes. What the Bengals need is a little pressure up front. Maybe just every other game, OK? They were last in the league with 25 sacks, and rookie James Francis got a third of those blitzing from linebacker.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Francis. He's going to be one of the best linebackers in the NFL. In his rookie year he had the eight sacks and also one interception, which he took 17 yards for a touchdown.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Tim Krumrie. It's a sad story, because Krumrie was perhaps the best nose tackle in the NFL until breaking his leg in Super Bowl XXIII. Following last season, the Bengals didn't even protect him in Plan B.

CLEVELAND BROWNS

BILL BELICHICK GIVES THIS TEAM direction, but they won't head up for another year. . . . Eric Metcalf is finally used properly and racks up 1,500 yards in total offense. . . . Fans don't chant "Goodbye, Art" anymore.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FOURTH: It's astounding that in one season a team can go from the AFC Championship Game right down into the toilet with a 3-13 record. Boy, the

touchdown, and then shut down the Bills' no-huddle offense. The Browns won't win more than six games this season, but keep an eye on Belichick. He will have this mess turned around quickly.

STRENGTHS: Go ahead and think about it. Hard to find, right? Bernie Kosar is coming off a bad season and has been all banged up, but if that elbow is OK Kosar can still be an effective quarterback. It doesn't help that he has a new quarterback coach and offensive coordinator to work with every year. Kosar's touchdowns have gone down from a high of 22 in the '87 strike-shortened season to 10 last year. He even lost a fan poll to Mike Pagel.

WEAKNESSES: The Browns' No. 1 weakness, luckily enough, is Belichick's strength: the defense. Last season Cleveland gave up 462 points, which was only 253 more than the Giants. Unfortunately, the Browns have only one player, defensive tackle Michael Dean Perry, who Belichick might have started on his Giants defense. He will try to hide the lack of talent this year by coming up with different schemes.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Metcalf. He's been badly misused in his first two years. The Browns gave up four draft choices to get him, and then Carson didn't have a clue how to use him. One of the misconceptions about



New blood: Modell made Belichick his fourth coach in three seasons.

Browns were a disgrace last year, which makes you think that Bud Carson did an unbelievable job in '89. Belichick is one of the game's bright minds. In the playoffs last year, his Giants defense held Neal Anderson to 19 yards rushing, the 49ers to one

Belichick is that he doesn't know offense. Look for the Browns to unleash Metcalf.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Frank Minnifield. The Browns gave up on Hanford Dixon last year, and now it appears that his buddy, Minnifield, is slowing down.

AFC WEST

The young, hungry Chiefs will dump the Bills as reigning AFC champs.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Kansas City Chiefs11-5
2. Los Angeles Raiders10-6
3. San Diego Chargers9-7
4. Denver Broncos6-10
5. Seattle Seahawks6-10

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

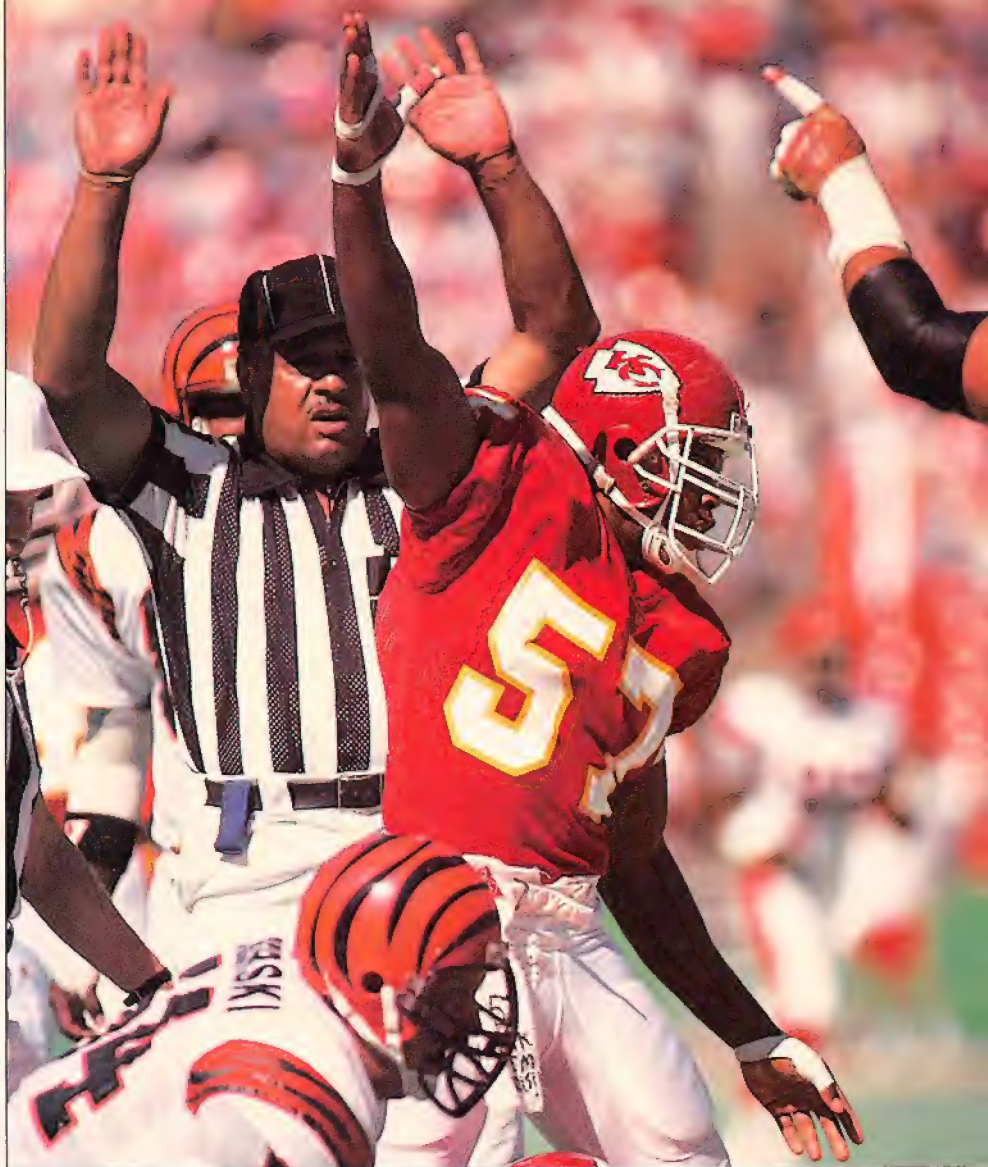
THE BIG TIME: THE CHIEFS GET TO the Super Bowl. . . Derrick Thomas may not get seven sacks in a game again, but never again will he let Dave Krieg slip out of his arms and throw the winning touchdown. . . Barry Word and Christian Okoye combine for 2,200 yards.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIRST: Marty Schottenheimer and Carl Peterson have done a great job putting together this team in such a short time. Remember, the Chiefs are only three years removed from the Frank Gansz fiasco. How can the Chiefs get to the Super Bowl with a retread like Steve DeBerg at quarterback, which defies all the laws of this game that require an elite QB to make a team a power? Well, Schottenheimer has smartly constructed an offense around Okoye and Word with an occasional DeBerg bomb. And it helps that DeBerg threw six touchdowns for every interception. His 23-to-4 ratio was astounding. And it helps that the Chiefs have a dominating defense, led by Thomas, who led the NFL with 20 sacks last season, and the best corners in the NFL in Kevin Ross and Albert Lewis.

STRENGTHS: The Chiefs already were punishing defenses by pounding Okoye 25 times a game, and then a funny thing happened on the way to the playoffs: Word became the word. He's not that much different than Okoye—nothing fancy, just power football. Between them, they carried 449 times for 1,820 yards. By late in the season the Chiefs had taken over as the AFC's No. 2 team behind Buffalo.

WEAKNESSES: DeBerg is a problem? Only if he has a career flashback. Last year he played under control and went months without throwing an interception, but before last year he had 143 touchdowns and 171 interceptions in his career. In fact, the reason we see the Chiefs getting to the Super Bowl but not winning it is DeBerg. Now, you say, if Jeff Hostetler can win a Super Bowl, why not DeBerg? Good point.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Linebacker Percy Snow. Last year's No. 1 draft choice is a perfect fit in the middle of the defense. He



Young Chiefs such as Chris Martin will bury the hatchet—in your head.

was compared by his college coach at Michigan State, George Perles, to Jack Lambert, whom Perles coached with the Steelers.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Okoye was the subject of trade talk all spring. Word has diminished Okoye's importance to Kansas City. The one thing people forget: Although The Nigerian Nightmare has been in the league just four years, he's 30 years old.

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS

BO WON'T KNOW FOOTBALL THIS year—or, perhaps, ever again. . . Ronnie Lott shows the 49ers he still had something left, but Roger Craig doesn't. . . Jay Schroeder throws more interceptions than touchdowns before he gets benched.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH SECOND: Al Davis needs to take this team in for a group frontal lobotomy. That might be the only way to wipe out the 51-3 disaster to Buffalo in the AFC title game. The Raiders obviously have talent, but Art Shell is going to have to do a real psych job to get this team motivated

again. Maybe that's where Lott can really help—he's the ultimate leader—but the Raiders will fall short this year.

STRENGTHS: Davis learned his lesson when he hired Mike Shanahan a few years ago: The Raiders are one team that needs to keep it in the family. Shell, a longtime Raider and Davis favorite, has restored the old silver-and-black tradition. The return of the chip-on-the-shoulder attitude, more than anything, was responsible for the Raiders winning the division last year and getting back into the playoffs for the first time since 1985. Now Davis has brought in Lott, who won four Super Bowls in 10 years with the 49ers. Lott can still play, but is even more valuable as a voice in the locker room.

WEAKNESSES: Maybe we're being too harsh with Schroeder. Maybe not. Mike White did a masterful job with the ex-Redskin last year, coaching him to a season of 19 touchdowns and only nine interceptions. However, Schroeder became Schroeder again vs. Buffalo in the AFC title game. Five inter-

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

ceptions. That's the Schroeder we've come to know and not like.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Tim Brown. People forget he was an All-Pro returner as a rookie in 1988. Then he tore up his knee in the season opener in 1989 and was eased back in last year. Brown, the predecessor to The Rocket in the do-everything role at Notre Dame, is a star waiting to happen. It will happen this year.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Marcus Allen. Nobody is going to miss Bo Jackson more than Allen. Some tried to create a controversy between the two, but what Bo did for Marcus was extend his career, not shorten it. Now that the full load is back on Allen—forget about Craig—you will see how much he's lost.

only the totally lame didn't make it, but in the silly world of the AFC, 9-7 or 8-8 makes it nowadays, and there's no reason the Chargers shouldn't at least be in contention this year.

STRENGTHS: The pressure is on Henning to win right away—Spanos is not a patient owner—and if the Chargers are going to take the next step toward the playoffs, it's the defense that will have to get it done. San Diego's strength is in its front seven: Lee Williams, Burt Grossman, O'Neal, Junior Seau, and Henry Rolling. The defense was ranked No. 5 last year, a vast departure from the offense-crazy Air Coryell days of the early '80s.

WEAKNESSES: It's funny, but the Chargers have some offensive weapons. Marion Butts is a punishing runner; so is Rod Bernstein, the converted tight end. Anthony Miller is the fastest wide receiver in the NFL. Now, if the Chargers just had a quarterback to run the show. Henning likes Tolliver, and Bea-



Fenner's stock has never been higher, but Seattle will hit the bottom.

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS

ALEX SPANOS TRIES TO FIRE DAN Henning at least three times, but is talked out of it by Bobby Beathard; then Beathard fires Henning. . . . Billy Joe Tolliver and John Friesz are a forgettable tagteam at quarterback. . . . Leslie O'Neal complains all season about his contract.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH THIRD: Give Beathard one more draft and the Chargers will challenge for the division title. This year? They have a good shot at a wild card and might even jump past the Raiders into second place. The Chargers haven't been in the playoffs since 1982, the strike season when

thard likes Friesz, but it really doesn't matter. Neither one can do it, which is why the Chargers had the No. 24 passing game last year.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Seau missed nearly all of camp in a contract dispute and then wasn't happy with the deal he got because it was a reported \$1 million less than Keith McCants', but now that he's had a year to get focused he should turn into a dominating player.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Linebacker Billy Ray Smith has never developed into the player the Chargers envisioned. Now he regularly gets handled by any mediocre offensive lineman.

DENVER BRONCOS

NO PLAYOFFS AGAIN FOR JOHN ELWAY and, thankfully, no Super Bowl for the Broncos. . . . Dan Reeves makes it through the season without any physical problems, but coaching this team gives him plenty of heartache. . . . Karl Mecklenburg shifts to free safety as he attempts to become the Cesar Tovar of the NFL and play every defensive position.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FOURTH: Elway had an off-season and feuded with Reeves. At one point, Elway sulked that the coach never talks to him. These two have been going at it since 1983, though, so that's no big story. The story is that the Broncos have dropped so drastically so quickly. Reeves must build up the defense and get back on speaking terms with Elway.

STRENGTHS: Having Bobby Humphrey, a genuine 1,000-yard back, makes things easier. However, although Humphrey may be



Denver's most consistent player, and Mecklenburg has showed amazing versatility in what seems to be annual changes at linebacker, this team still belongs to the mercurial Elway. When he's good, he's unstoppable, but when he's off, look out. He never mastered the touch pass, and his legs don't buy him as much time as they used to, but Elway is still Elway.

WEAKNESSES: They should really be called the Enver Broncos: There's no D in Denver. They went from giving up the fewest points (226) in the NFL in 1989 to giving up 374 last year. The 55 the 49ers hung on them in Super Bowl XXIV was a sign of things to come.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Humphrey. He's put together back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons,

but Humphrey is still getting better. He doesn't have the great speed, but watch him once and know one thing: He knows how to run.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Pick any veteran on that defense: Mecklenburg, Dennis Smith . . . all the Super Bowl veterans. They are worn down and worn out.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

THE FORECAST IS DULL—THAT'S THE Chuck Knox way. . . . Dave Krieg doesn't have four fumbles returned for touchdowns, but he has four interceptions returned for touchdowns. . . . The Seahawks won't show Brian Bosworth's new movie at their night-before-the-game team dinner.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIFTH: Krieg is the epitome of the hot-and-cold quarterback. He had four fumbles returned for touchdowns last year. Knox would not mind replacing him, but Kelly Stouffer has been a huge disappointment, and first-round pick Dan McGwire needs time. So, without the QB and with lots of defensive problems, the Hawks are staring at fifth place.

STRENGTHS: It's Knox, no question. Seattle got off to a horrible 0-3 start, then won nine of its last 13 games and barely missed making the playoffs. He did perhaps his best coaching job last season with a very thin cast. Seattle has some players on offense—John L. Williams, Derrick Fenner, Brian Blades, and Tommy Kane—but minimal defensive talent. This is going to be a long season in the Kingdome.

WEAKNESSES: Doesn't Seattle always seem to finish within one game of .500? The Seahawks are never terrible but never very good, either. Last year all but one of their linebackers spent time in injured reserve. Their No. 1 pick, Cortez Kennedy, was late coming to camp and then looked like he spent his holdout loading up at the International House of Pancakes. The Seahawks are two years away from winning the division—and that's only if Stouffer turns out to be a player.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Kane. Everybody thought Blades would take over the Steve Largent role as Krieg's favorite receiver, but it's turned out to be Kane, a No. 3 pick from three years ago. He's an acrobatic receiver who would put up big numbers if he played with a blue-chip quarterback. Even so, he had 52 catches last year.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: It's a tie between those aging defensive players, Jacob Green and Jeff Bryant. Have these guys been around for 20 years or what? ■

GARY MYERS *claims he wasn't pressured by Lenny Dawson, his cohort on HBO's weekly "Inside the NFL," to pick K.C. to reach the Super Bowl.*

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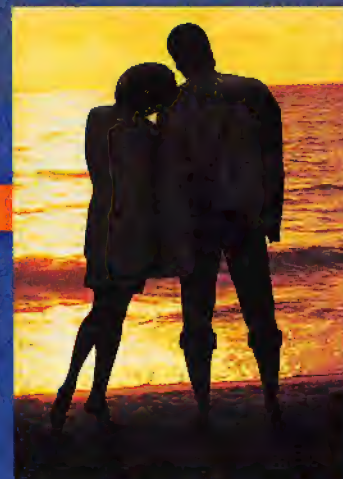
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NFC EAST

The Giants will hold off all rivals and win consecutive Super Bowls.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. New York Giants11-5
2. Washington Redskins10-6
3. Philadelphia Eagles8-8
4. Dallas Cowboys6-10
5. Phoenix Cardinals5-11

NEW YORK GIANTS

THE DEFENDING SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS again win their division and the NFC title game and reach Super Bowl XXVI. . . . The young offense (with the exception of 35-year-old Phil Simms) compensates for an aging defense. . . . Without Bill Parcells minding the store, the once-dominant Giants defense will sag appreciably this time around.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIRST:

The last time the Giants won a game with Roman numerals, they crashed and burned with a 6-9 record in 1987. That was a strike year, however, and these Giants should be able to get their helmets on after losing three of four games down the regular-season stretch. The Giants' philosophy of low-risk, time-consuming offense and suffocating defense means they don't lose games to inferior teams. That and a strange ability to beat the Washington Redskins give the Giants the upper hand this season.

STRENGTHS: Whether Simms or Super Bowl hero Jeff Hostetler wins the starting job at quarterback, the Giants feel the offense that scored 335 points and won 13 of 16 games last year could be much better. Optimism flows here as freely as Charles Barkley's saliva.

The offensive line and wide receivers are still surprisingly young. The secondary, anchored by safeties Myron Guyton and Greg Jackson, is similarly precocious. Punter Sean Landeta led the conference with a 44.1-yard gross.

WEAKNESSES: Tight end. For six seasons, Mark Bavaro has been the hub of the offense, but team sources suggest his ravaged knee will force him to retire. Howard Cross and Bob Mrosko collectively can't come close to replacing Bavaro, who was still a playoff force on one leg. The Giants desperately need a pass-rusher to cover for an aging defensive line and outside linebackers. Losing defensive coordinator Bill Belichick will hurt.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Rodney Hampton. His first carry from scrimmage in the exhibition season was a touchdown. Last season as a rookie, he ran for 455 yards on 109 carries before breaking his leg. As the featured back this year (Super Bowl MVP Ottis Anderson has been rendered null and void), Hampton will clear 1,000 yards. Easily.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Lawrence Taylor. He's 32 and been to 10 Pro Bowls in 10 years. Last season he managed 10½ sacks, but his game-turning plays evaporated. This is the season all that mayhem on and off the field catches up with LT.

WASHINGTON REDSKINS

ULTRAFOCUSED COACH JOE GIBBS squeezes another double-figure victory season from this uneven team. . . . During training camp Gibbs is surprised to learn George Bush has replaced Ronald Reagan in the White House. . . . The Redskins succeed despite a corps of venerable running backs with enough mileage to qualify for early retirement and a defense that continues to be mediocre.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH SECOND: The Giants, who have beaten the Skins six straight times, just seem to have their number. Washington should have won both meetings last season but found a bizarre way to lose each time. Even with a likely split this year, the Redskins aren't consistent enough to

The veteran core of the G-Men's defense might have finally lost its heart.



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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

win all the games they're supposed to—and that's something a champion must do.

STRENGTHS: Gibbs remains one of the best at his business. He's 113-55 in 10 seasons and a breathtaking 12-4 in the playoffs. The offense that managed to score points even with a rookie running back playing quarterback last season will be potent again. That's

signee and former 1,000-yard rusher should help carry the rushing load.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: The Skins wore out running back Earnest Byner (297 carries, 1,219 yards) last year. He looked tired at the end. When you post 4,512 yards in seven seasons, it all adds up.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

THE EAGLES IMplode BY MIDSEASON in the wake of what one player called the "back-stabbing soap opera" that followed coach Buddy Ryan's firing. . . . Quarterback



Cowboys opponents are finding Smith is one tough hombre to corral.

because wide receivers Gary Clark, ageless Art Monk, and Ricky Sanders (who combined for 199 catches, 2,609 yards, and 16 touchdowns) are still dangerous. Linebacker Wilber Marshall is a tremendous player against the run. Kicker Chip Lohmiller was second in the league with 131 points.

WEAKNESSES: Quarterback. No one is confusing Mark Rypien and Stan Humphries with Joe Theismann or Sonny Jurgensen. The aging defense never replaced pass-rusher Dexter Manley, and the secondary is slow and allowed 21 touchdown passes a year ago. Plus, who will play middle linebacker?

PLAYER ON THE RISE: John Settle. A forgotten man in Atlanta, the 26-year-old Plan B

Randall Cunningham out-Bos Bo Jackson, joins the NBA, and wins the slam-dunk competition. . . . The Eagles' three young wide receivers will be compared to the Redskins' celebrated troika.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH THIRD: Clearly, this is a team in turmoil. The first agenda at minicamp was a players-only meeting to patch up differences between pro- and anti-Cunningham forces. Many of Cunningham's teammates, particularly on defense, feel he is more interested in personal statistics than winning and claim he was partly responsible for the departure of Ryan and the elevation of Ryan's offensive coordinator, Rich Kotite. The defense may lose some of its fire with the Bud Man gone; it happened in Chicago in 1986.

STRENGTHS: The future of the organization rides with its young offensive stars. Cunningham is the heart of Kotite's game plan. As rookies, wide receivers Fred Barnett and Calvin Williams combined for 73 catches, 1,323 yards, and 17 touchdowns, and Mike Bellamy is expected to match them soon. Keith Jackson is as good any tight end in the game. The prospects are potentially exhilarating—with one small problem. . . .

WEAKNESSES: The offensive line. The skill-position players won't be a factor if the tattered offensive line doesn't improve radically. The Eagles were so desperate to get offensive tackle Antone Davis in the draft that they flopped first-round picks with the Packers and threw in another No. 1 (1992) for good measure. Don't let the 1990 first-place ranking in rushing fool you; that was a tribute to Cunningham's ability to escape the pass rush. For what it's worth, Philly's pass defense was the league's fourth-worst.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Defensive back Ben Smith, who's poised for a breakthrough year. When he's allowed to shift from cornerback to his natural position of safety, the spot he'll play in the nickel package, he will dominate.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Defensive tackle Jerome Brown. He was voted to the Pro Bowl last season, but his ailing shoulder and elbow won't permit a return trip.

DALLAS COWBOYS

THE COWBOYS TAKE A BIG STEP—sideways—under coach Jimmy Johnson. . . . The rough-and-tumble NFC East moves Johnson to apply for admission to the NFC West. . . . As a desperate (and belated) measure, Johnson switches from hairspray to styling mousse.

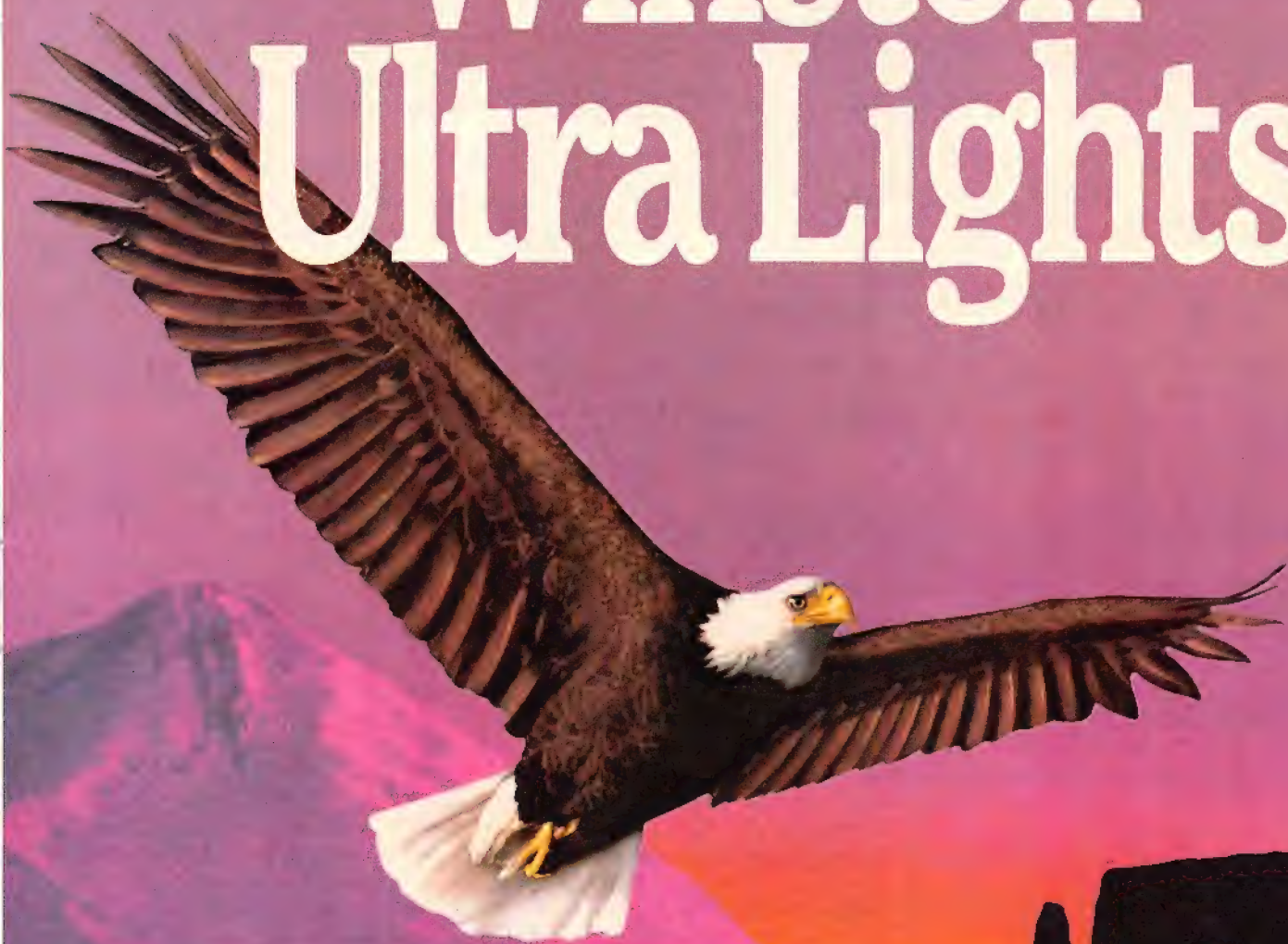
WHY THEY'LL FINISH FOURTH: Believe it or not, this could be the team of the '90s—but don't jump on that bandwagon too fast. Dallas is still a year away. For starters, the team is young. The Cowboys reeled in a posse of draft choices in dealing Herschel Walker and Steve Walsh and had three first-rounders this spring. Dallas improved from 1-15 to 7-9, the league's biggest turnaround a season ago, and just missed a playoff berth by losing the last two games. The schedule is tougher this time around, though, and the Cowboys won't sneak up on anyone.

STRENGTHS: Second-year running back Emmitt Smith and third-year quarterback Troy Aikman are future Pro Bowl players. In 1990 Smith gained 937 yards and scored 11 touchdowns as a rookie, and Aikman made great strides. Both players were better when receiver Michael Irvin returned from injury. With some draft help along the line and at receiver, the last-ranked offense could become, uh, passable.

WEAKNESSES: The no-fame defense actually kept the Cowboys in games last year, but they

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need more athletes, especially up front. Thirty-year-old Jim Jeffcoat, who went to New

Bowl-champion Giants twice by a total of four points and split a pair of 23-21 games with Philadelphia. So Bugel hung on with old-timers like Green and Smith when he might have gotten something for them in trades. Bugel needs to start from scratch in the manner of Jimmy Johnson.



Rosenbach was off-balance for a while, but watch him rise in Phoenix.

England in the package for the No. 1 pick, was the best player on the line; now Dallas must wait on Russell Maryland. Johnson has proved himself as a GM, but the jury is still out on him as an NFL coach. If Aikman gets hurt only Babe Laufenburg and fourth-round pick Bill Musgrave are behind him.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Smith. Scouts say with any kind of blocking he could be great. He plays bigger than 5'9", 199 pounds.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Alonzo Highsmith had two fine years in Houston (1988 and '89), but spent nearly all of last season glued to the Cowboys bench.

PHOENIX CARDINALS

RECEIVER ROY GREEN (34) IS SIDELINED when the Geritol runs out. . . . The league's third-longest television blackout streak continues. . . . Defensive end Dexter Manley returns to pass-rushing productivity after a protracted bout with substance abuse.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIFTH: Coach Joe Bugel walks a difficult line. The Cardinals were 5-11 last year, but they lost to the Super

STRENGTHS: The Cardinals thought they solved their problems at running back when they drafted Indiana's Anthony Thompson (106 carries, 390 yards) in the second round last year, but grabbed Johnny Johnson of San Jose State in the seventh round for insurance. Johnson was the rookie surprise of the season, gaining 926 yards despite some injuries. Together they'll be dangerous.

WEAKNESSES: The defense, ranked 26th against the run, needs help at linebacker because some of the past drafts didn't pan out. Moreover, the Cardinals can't seem to decide if they want to play a three- or four-man line, or if Freddie Joe Nunn is a defensive end or a linebacker.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Quarterback Timm Rosenbach. The 1989 supplemental choice made a lot of good decisions in his second season. With the emergence of rookie wide-out Ricky Proehl (56 catches, 802 yards), Rosenbach's numbers will improve.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Offensive tackle Luis Sharpe. He's been to three Pro Bowls, but the pass-blocking machine will show signs of wear in his 10th season.

NFC CENTRAL

The Vikings cruise to the division title behind a fifth-place schedule.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. Minnesota Vikings10-6
2. Chicago Bears9-7
3. Tampa Bay Buccaneers7-9
4. Detroit Lions6-10
5. Green Bay Packers6-10

MINNESOTA VIKINGS

HERSCHEL WALKER, SMITTEN WITH the pole vault bug, bids farewell to bobsledding (and football) and points for the gold medal at Barcelona. . . . With former general manager Mike Lynn gone to run the World League of American Football, the Vikings heal their massive internal injuries and become known as Team Solidarity. . . . Jerry Burns lasts another year.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIRST: The league's biggest band of underachievers has everything in its favor: (1) No one is expecting much from the team that plummeted to 6-10 last year, last in the NFC Central; (2) believe it or not, the Vikings still have one of the most talented rosters in the league; (3) the fifth-place schedule is loaded with cupcakes; and (4) the Plan B signings of linebacker Greg Manusky, wide receiver James Pruitt, and defensive back Felix Wright will help fill the cracks.

STRENGTHS: Pro Bowl players are everywhere, but they just can't seem to play together . . . until this year. The offensive line, anchored by tackle Gary Zimmerman, is skilled and should allow Walker and Anthony Carter to perform the way their résumés suggest they can. New offensive coordinator Tom Moore must find a way to create a niche for Walker, probably a one-back offense. Monte Kiffin, the new defensive coordinator, still has end Chris Doleman and tackle Keith Millard (if his tender knee holds up). And don't underestimate the power of that last-place schedule, which includes Phoenix (twice), Atlanta, and the execrable Patriots.

WEAKNESSES: That cursed U-word, unity. The Vikings, scarred by strife, haven't had it. The situation at quarterback has been similarly unsettled: The brittle Wade Wilson can be effective but needs to be stroked, and, to this point, Burns hasn't been willing to coddle his starter. Maybe they'll meet somewhere in the middle. The Vikes also are shaky at linebacker, where 30-year-old Mike Merriweather is the best they can offer.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Henry Thomas. The

defensive tackle picked up more slack than most people expected, and with a healthy Millard he'll be a terror inside.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Carter. He's coming off an ankle injury and seems to have lost at least one explosive step off the line of scrimmage. Carter has never been one to kill himself in the weight room, something modern players in all sports have turned to in an effort to extend careers.

CHICAGO BEARS

DEFENSIVE TACKLE WILLIAM PERRY makes them forget that he was ever known as The Fridge. . . . Coach Mike Ditka, whom his players sometimes call "Sybil" for his multiple personalities, ditches his Ditka cologne to pitch for Chanel No. 5. . . . Quarterback Jim Harbaugh rushes for as many yards as Randall Cunningham, but passes for 2,000 fewer yards.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH SECOND: Given Ditka's ability to terrify his teams to the top (they have won six of the last seven NFC Central titles), most people expect them to win again. It won't happen, even if Ditka changes his drill sergeant approach. Do not

STRENGTHS: You want the truth? It's player personnel man Bill Tobin, who keeps finding great players in Chicago's typically low draft slot. Last year, when Chicago had an atypically high pick, everyone ripped the Bears for signing USC safety Mark Carrier before drafting him sixth overall, but he led the NFL with 10 interceptions. Neal Anderson, the 27th first-round choice in '86, was the conference's second-most productive running back with a combined 1,562 yards from scrimmage. The Bears roster is packed with starting former No. 1 picks.

WEAKNESSES: Quarterback. Mike Tomczak, who managed to win two playoff games in a Bears uniform, was a Plan B signee of the Green Bay Packers. That leaves the job to Harbaugh, who has never played in the postseason. Even if Harbaugh is ready to reach the top echelon of quarterbacks, an aging defense may prevent the team from following him. Dan Hampton has retired, and fellow defensive tackle Steve McMichael isn't far behind.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Wide receiver Wendell Davis. After struggling for two years with injuries, last season he had 39 catches for

Singletary. Singletary, the epicenter of this savage defense for a decade, has little left to give.

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

NEW COACH RICHARD WILLIAMSON produces a better debut season than his three predecessors—which isn't saying much. . . . For the first time in his five-year career, quarterback Vinny Testaverde throws more touchdowns than interceptions. . . . For the second time in two years, cornerback Wayne Haddix allows more touchdowns against him than his interception total.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH THIRD: There is good news and bad news in Tampa. The good? Ray Perkins and his appalling record of 19-41 were asked to leave after the season's 13th game. The bad? After coming close with several high-profile applicants, the Bucs gave the job to Williamson, the interim coach who had been with the team for four years. If Williamson doesn't get it done, Bill Parcells could be running the show in 1992.

STRENGTHS: Look at those first-round draft picks. Testaverde came in 1987 and after



It's never been so clear: The talented but constantly bickering Vikings are their own worst enemies.

be blinded by Chicago's 11-5 record. The Bears beat up on a fourth-place schedule but were 0-3 against playoff teams.

572 yards and three touchdowns and made four more for 89 yards in the playoffs.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Linebacker Mike

two brutal seasons has shown signs of becoming a force. Offensive tackle Paul Gruber was the 1988 choice and has become

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one of the league's best. Scouts say linebacker Broderick Thomas, a 1989 arrival, is ready for great things. Whether 1990 pick Keith McCants joins Thomas among the NFL's elite linebackers remains to be seen, but his Alabama pedigree is good. Free-agent rookie kicker Steve Christie missed only 4 of 27 field goal attempts.

WEAKNESSES: The Tampa Bay defense produced 42 takeaways (amazingly, only two teams had more), but the Bucs coughed it up 43 times. This was only partly Testaverde's fault. Outside of Gruber, the offensive line needs a lot of work. The offensive scheme needs to be tightened up to get more passes to running back Gary Anderson, wideout Mark Carrier (49 catches, 813 yards), and

PLAYERS ON THE RISE: McCants. He'll team with Thomas to give the Bucs a great linebacking duo.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Haddix. Only two defensive backs had more than his seven interceptions, but how many DBs gave up 10 touchdowns?

DETROIT LIONS

BARRY SANDERS, PERHAPS THE league's best running back since Eric Dickerson, does double-duty, running more and receiving, too. . . . Rodney Peete, the sixth-round draft choice in 1989, holds off 1990 first-round pick Andre Ware for the starting quarterback job. . . . After another so-so season the Lions finally break down and spring for a general manager.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FOURTH: Wayne Fontes (15-22) isn't a bad coach, but he's overtaxed as the bottom-line guy for the entire program now that Jerry Vainisi is out of the picture. CEO Chuck Schmidt basically negotiates contracts, so the Lions need a plan if they want to crawl from the mire in this division of parity-turned-parody.

STRENGTHS: As long as Sanders lines up in the backfield, the Lions will score points. Detroit is hoping to use Sanders more as a Thurman Thomas-like receiver, something he showed little interest in last season. With Mouse Davis and June Jones and their high-strung run-and-shoot offense gone, the Lions will use a four-wideout set that will sometimes downsize to three and feature (gasp!) a tight end and (groan!) two running backs. Peete doesn't have a \$4.7 million, four-year contract like Ware's, but his touchdowns-to-interceptions ratio of 18-to-17 is outstanding for a third-year passer.

WEAKNESSES: The defense ranked 28th in the NFL—dead last. There actually are some servicable players on that side of the

ball—namely, linebackers Mike Cofer and Chris Spielman—but nose tackle Jerry Ball is overrated, and safety Bennie Blades never developed into the big-time stopper the Lions imagined. This season the Lions have committed to a four-man line that should create more pressure on the passer.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Defensive tackle Marc Spindler. Last year's third-round pick is coming off a knee injury, but early returns suggest he'll be back at full speed.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Ball. He's listed at 6'1" and more than 300 pounds, and he's almost as unhappy as he is big. He wants \$1 million a year and a trade, and the Lions just might accommodate him with the latter.

GREEN BAY PACKERS

TONY MANDARICH, THE SPARSELY thatched offensive tackle, becomes a national spokesman for the Hair Club for Men. . . . Coach Lindy Infante, with four years' worth of contract still in front of him, continues to hone his sophisticated air attack at the expense of the running game. . . . Sizing up the situation a week into the season, the weary fans in Wisconsin throw their support behind the Bears.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIFTH: Infante's thing is offense; if he were the Giants offensive coordinator they'd probably never lose a game. Sure, the Packers play in a division where two teams play under domes and another hosts games in Florida, but Green Bay and Chicago have harsh climates that demand an ability to run.

STRENGTHS: The off-the-cuff answer is quarterback Don Majkowski, but despite glowing reports following his rotator cuff surgery last December many doubt that he'll be brilliant again anytime soon. That's why the Packers signed Chicago's Mike Tomczak. When Majkowski is throwing, Sterling Sharpe might be the third-best receiver in the league, behind San Francisco's Jerry Rice and Andre Rison of Atlanta.

WEAKNESSES: Got an hour? Sharpe and Majkowski aside, the draft choices of Packers VP Tom Braatz have been suspect at best. The offensive line is abysmal. The running game, ranked 26th last season, is nonexistent. There is no pass rush to speak of. The secondary, where three starters—Mark Murphy, Mark Lee, and Jerry Holmes—will all be 33 this season, might be the biggest liability of all.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Center James Campen. Very quietly, Campen became the Packers' best offensive lineman a year ago. Meanwhile . . .

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Mandarich. One of his teammates states the obvious, saying the right tackle peaked at Michigan State. Last year Mandarich led Packers linemen in sacks allowed and penalties taken.



The feud is hot, but the Packers and Bears aren't.

tight end Ron Hall. There are no defensive linemen to speak of, yet the Bucs are going to change to a 4-3 this season under Floyd Peters.

NFC WEST

The 49ers should win the division, but their glory days have ended.

PROJECTED ORDER OF FINISH

1. San Francisco 49ers11-5
2. Los Angeles Rams9-7
3. New Orleans Saints7-9
4. Atlanta Falcons6-10

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

THE REBUILDING 49ERS FALL completely apart at the seams—and go a dismal 11-5. Dismal for them, anyway. . . . San Francisco watches with envy as future Hall of Fame safety and Plan B departee Ronnie Lott proves in a Los Angeles Raiders uniform that reports of his death were greatly exaggerated. . . . In his seventh season, wide receiver Jerry Rice (79 touchdowns in 92 regular-season games) falls just short of the 100-touchdown record that a future Hall-of-Famer, Seattle's Steve Largent, took 14 seasons to achieve.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FIRST: Three obvious reasons: the Rams, Saints, and Falcons. Seriously, this is a lot like the baseball team across the Bay: You get tired of seeing the A's dominate the American League West but, like it or not, there's no one better. Sure, there will be a drop-off for the team that has won 32 of 37 games under coach George Seifert, but this season won't be a complete disaster.

STRENGTHS: Quarterback Joe Montana and Rice may be the best players at their respective positions in the history of the game. It really isn't fair to allow them to play together, but the simple fact that they do explains why the 49ers have appeared in the NFC Championship Game the last three years running. Wideouts John Taylor and Mike Sherrard are merely outstanding. It all adds up to a glittering passing game that was surpassed last season only by the air circus in Houston. The defense, particularly against the run, is consistently tenacious.

WEAKNESSES: The downside of that passing game has been a complete inability to run the football. The 49ers averaged 3.8 yards per carry, tied for last in the NFC. The signs of offensive decay are everywhere: Roger Craig followed Lott through Plan B to the Raiders, the offensive line is extremely weak, and even Montana can't last forever. The signing of Plan B guard Roy Foster should help up front, but the situation at safety is a mess. The 49ers have collected the old (Dave Waymer and Todd Bowles) and the young (Johnny Jackson and David Whit-



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more), but the coverage will still be soft up the middle.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Defensive tackle Dennis Brown, last year's second-round pick. At one point down the stretch he had six sacks in eight games.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: The feeling around the league is that Montana will be danger-

ously fragile at 35. Remember the chilling hit he took from Giants defensive end Leonard Marshall in the NFC Championship Game? Montana's passer rating dropped from his record-setting 112.4 in 1989 to last year's mortal 89.0, and he threw 16 interceptions, by far his highest total ever:

LOS ANGELES RAMS

AFTER LAST YEAR'S 5-11 RECORD, coach John Robinson takes advantage of his stay of execution and leads the Rams back to the playoffs. . . . Jeff Fisher's new, aggres-

sive defense proves unsuitable for the existing personnel. . . . Quarterback Jim Everett, who crumbled under the pressure of losing a year ago, steps out as one of the league's best.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH SECOND: Like the Minnesota Vikings, the Rams are a respectable team that landed an easy schedule by bombing out in 1990. The offense could be quite good, but the defense needs a lot of work. As always, spending money to make money seems to be a problem in Anaheim. Signing 49ers safety Ronnie Lott would have been a natural for Robinson, who coached him at USC. However, when the price began to rise the Rams bailed out, perhaps thinking of last year's failure with running back Curt Warner, and the crosstown Raiders eventually stole Lott away.

STRENGTHS: The Rams were ranked fifth in offense last year, despite losing 11 games. Everett, who had a terrific season in 1989, felt he had to win every game by himself, and it didn't happen. Everett lashed out at management and the porous defense, but after an offseason to contemplate things, he seems to have a new attitude. Certainly, he has the receivers in Henry Ellard (76 catches, 1,294 yards) and Flipper Anderson (51 catches, 1,097 yards) and more help along the line.

WEAKNESSES: Defense has been this team's Achilles' heel in recent years. Last year's unit allowed 412 points and finished second-to-last in pass defense. Coordinator Fritz Shurmur and his vanilla scheme are gone, replaced by Fisher and a rambling, gambling Buddy Ryanesque 46 defense, the kind that Robinson has always been leery of. While this isn't the roster Fisher had in Philadelphia, there are a few possibilities. The first order of business is defining the role of linebacker Kevin Greene, who was jerked all over the place last season but still managed 13 sacks.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Running back Cleveland Gary. He rushed for 808 yards and scored 15 touchdowns last year, but also led the league with 12 fumbles, losing seven of them. If he can find the handle, he should crack the 1,000-yard barrier.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Center Doug Smith. After five consecutive Pro Bowl seasons, Smith missed in '90. He could well be a back-up this year.

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

CRAIG (IRONHEAD) HEYWARD, tipping the scales somewhere past 270 pounds, is asked to block for himself by moving from fullback to offensive tackle. . . . The Saints, whose record has gone from 12-3, to 10-6, to 9-7, to 8-8 in four years, complete the regression and finish 7-9. . . . Coach Jim Mora, the arch-conservative, undergoes a





How do you run on a mean Saints defense led by Swilling? You don't.

conversion and contemplates voting Democratic in 1992.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH THIRD: In Mora's perfect world, no one ever passes Go. In truth, Mora doesn't have the talent to air it out like the other three division rivals. The wide receivers, beyond Eric Martin, were weak a year ago, which is why the Saints signed Plan B wideout Quinn Early and drafted Wesley Carroll in the second round. The ongoing saga of unhappy quarterback Bobby Hebert still hangs over this team.

STRENGTHS: Linebackers. Believe it or not, Rickey Jackson, Sam Mills, Vaughan Johnson, and Pat Swilling all have been elected to play in the Pro Bowl. Mills led the team with 112 tackles, and some personnel men feel Johnson (102 tackles) is the best inside linebacker in the NFL. Swilling, who looks at times like Lawrence Taylor, finished the 1990 season with a team-high 11 sacks—and for the first time in three years, he won't miss training camp time whining about a contract. Jackson was smart enough to fall on a league-high and team-record seven fumbles. The run defense has been sound for some time.

WEAKNESS: Obviously, Saints president Jim Finks saw something in Steve Walsh when he sent a bunch of draft choices to Dallas for the young quarterback. Nonetheless, NFL scouts aren't convinced Walsh can lead a team at this level with success. The immediate downside of the deal is that the Saints are prevented from stocking up on blue-chip talent because they were without first- and third-round picks this year.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Defensive end Renaldo Turnbull. Last year's first-round pick tied for the NFL rookie lead with nine sacks. This season he'll team up with Swilling on the right side to give the Saints one of the league's more lethal one-two pass-rushing threats.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Jackson. He still

has a nose for the ball, but at 33 he's starting to slow down. The last time he made the Pro Bowl was 1986.

ATLANTA FALCONS

THE MOUTHS OF CORNERBACK "NEON Deion" Sanders and coach Jerry Glanville are even more active than the Falcons' offensive and defensive units, which is saying something. . . . The flurry of Plan B activity (10 players were lost and six signed) has absolutely no effect on the team that was 5-11 a year ago. . . . Wide receiver Andre Rison again produces statistics that compare favorably with Jerry Rice.

WHY THEY'LL FINISH FOURTH: The Falcons may be the fastest team in football, but a track team of wide receivers won't do them much good in this violent sport. Quarterback Chris Miller should be sound after suffering a broken collarbone, but he is not the long-term answer.

STRENGTHS: The Falcons, at the very least, play interesting games. They scored 348 points and allowed 365, which meant 45-35 and 44-24 scores in consecutive weeks. Unfortunately, Atlanta lost those games. We'll say this: The effort is there. The offensive line, featuring Bill Fralic and Chris Hinton, is strong, and scouts say Steve Broussard may be ready to play like a poor man's Barry Sanders. Strong safety Brian

Jordan, one anonymous year out of Richmond, was among the league leaders in tackles.

WEAKNESSES: Glanville has his pluses and minuses. Last year he tried to dictate terms on defense by blitzing and got burned repeatedly. Whether or not the pass defense that ranked last in the NFL is aggressive or passive this season hinges on whether first-round draft selection Bruce Pickens can complement Sanders, who spent his off-season playing left field for the Atlanta Braves. The drafting during the late '80s was weak, and there have been whispers that the Falcons might cut linebacker Aundray Bruce, the first player taken in the 1988 draft.

PLAYER ON THE RISE: Nose tackle Tory Epps, last year's eighth-round draft choice. He initially won Tony Casillas' job by default when the Pro Bowl nose held out. Epps held on to start all 16 games.

PLAYER ON THE DECLINE: Casillas. After missing a few games at the top of the season, Casillas never emerged from Glanville's doghouse. He later was suspended for another two games for missing a team flight after claiming illness.

GREG GARBER *has figured out all there is to know about the NFC—except why Phoenix is in the East, Tampa Bay in the Central, and Atlanta in the West.*

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After the never-ending National Football League draft on April 21-22 that set records only for boredom, just one team is assured of being in Minneapolis for Super Bowl XXVI. That's the Minnesota Vikings—and it's unlikely they will be in the game. In other words, nobody can put in any claims for the Metrodome Super Bowl based on any rookie help. It was a talent-poor draft even before Raghbir (Rocket) Ismail signed his four-year, \$18.2 million contract with the

It wasn't smart thinking, especially when word leaked that Argos owners Bruce McNall, Wayne Gretzky, and John Candy included a clause that allows Ismail to bolt the CFL and sign with the NFL after any of his four seasons. Davis took no risk, particularly in a draft that scouts had called the worst in 20 years. At the worst, Ismail's contract is up in November 1994 and the Raiders have his exclusive NFL rights until the '95 draft, if there is one. After that, Davis has right of first refusal to match any NFL offer The Rocket receives. Is there anyone who doesn't believe Ismail will be a

picked up a bunch of good players. Tackle Pat Harlow was taken with the No. 11 pick. (Ironically, the Cowboys wanted him at No. 12 but were edged out on what was originally their own selection.) They traded up—with Dallas again—to get versatile running back Leonard Russell, also in the first. Where's the quarterback? Maryland's Scott Zolak, who many projected to go in the second round, was still on the board at the top of the fourth round. He could be the sleeper of the whole draft. **Grade: B**
MIAMI DOLPHINS Accomplished: Don Shula avoided a mutiny when he dumped

AVANILLA SUNDAY

The Cowboys took defensive tackle Russell Maryland in a draft that will be remembered more for one player who wasn't in it than the ones who were

Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League.

This draft will be remembered for a first round that dragged on for five hours because teams were using their full 15 minutes to (a) try to make some trades and (b) set contract parameters with agents in an attempt to avoid summer-long holdouts. Most of all, though, it will be remembered for The Rocket and how everybody thinks Al Davis is such a genius again. (Of course, if Davis were such a genius Jay Schroeder would not have been his quarterback the last few years, and the Raiders would not have been stomped by the Bills 51-3 in the AFC Championship Game.) Getting Ismail at pick No. 100 when he would have been pick No. 1 wasn't a question of Davis' brilliance: Everybody else was just being shortsighted. It was a case where no GM or coach, fighting every year for his job, was going to invest in the future by taking Ismail when he might not even have his job when The Rocket came back across the border.

Raider by 1993 at the latest? Maybe even sooner?

Anyway, the big winners in this draft were the Falcons and Cowboys, two teams on the way up; the Patriots, who will stay down for a while; and the Broncos, who need to bounce back quickly before John Elway runs out of gas. Here's a look at the six divisions, with teams ranked and graded on how well they did on draft day:

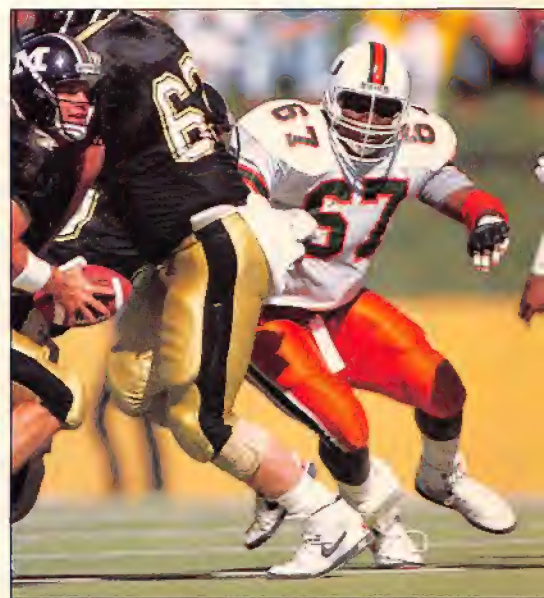
AFC EAST

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS Accomplished: They bailed out of the Rocket Derby a little late, minimizing the value of the top draft pick. When they finally dealt with Dallas, all they managed to pick up was the 11th and 41st picks plus fringe players Eugene Lockhart, David Howard, and Ron Francis—but at least they got something. It would have been fitting if they went ahead and drafted The Rocket and then he signed with Toronto. Those types of things tend to happen to New England. **Best move:** The Pats

cornerback Tim McKyer on the Falcons for the Nos. 3 and 12 picks. Last year Shula paid for McKyer with picks in rounds 2 and 11 to the 49ers. He gave more than he got, but McKyer helped him get into the playoffs. However, McKyer angered so many of his teammates with his big mouth—Hugh Green reportedly pinned him against the wall—that there was no way Shula could bring him back. So, McKyer is in Atlanta.

Best move: The Marks Brothers are slowing down, so Shula picked up a clone in Miami receiver Randal Hill. His 4.35 speed made him the second fastest wideout in the draft behind Ismail, but he's the ultimate hot dog. Shula will have to work from day one to calm this kid down, but Dan Marino is going to love his speed. **Grade: B**

NEW YORK JETS Accomplished: GM Dick Steinberg burned a few thousand miles of phone wire trying to move up ahead of Atlanta in the second round. Steinberg wanted quarterback Brett Favre; so did Atlanta, which was picking one spot ahead.



Steinberg called a half-dozen teams offering a mid-round pick to swap spots. He came close with the Cardinals to move up only two spots, but Phoenix wouldn't budge. Oh well, maybe Browning Nagle will turn out to be better than Favre. If not, Steinberg won't forgive himself for not being able to swing a deal. **Best move:** This was a weak draft—everybody knew a year ago that it would be a forgettable 12 rounds—so it wasn't a terrible idea at the time when Steinberg forfeited his No. 1 pick to take Rob Moore in last summer's supplemental draft. It turned out that the Jets would have had the eighth pick in the first round. The only player left on the board the Jets would have possibly taken instead of Moore was offensive tackle Antone Davis. The Jets considered Moore better than any receiver in this draft. Anyway, if Nagle and Moore turn out to be a dangerous duo, then this draft was a success. **Grade: C+**

BUFFALO BILLS Accomplished: Let's face it: This team didn't need a whole lot, and since the Bills picked 26th in the first round, there wasn't much left. So, Bill Polian decided to go for a cornerback in the first round for the second straight year. Henry Jones and last year's No. 1, James Williams, eventually will start together. **Best move:** The parts are already in place for another Super Bowl run. Jones will help in the nickel defense. They might get some pass rush help out of No. 2 pick Phil Hansen, a small college player from North Dakota State. Overall, this was a pretty no-name draft for Buffalo. **Grade: C-**

INDIANAPOLIS COLTS Accomplished: The Colts were nowhere to be found in the first round. They bailed out last year in the deal that helped them get the 1990 overall No. 1 pick from Atlanta, which they used on Jeff George. Good move. The Colts have their quarterback for the next 10 years, which is more than anybody else can say coming out of this draft. **Best move:** Jimmy Irsay has a tendency to make impulsive trades, and you got the feeling that he would find a way to get into the first round of this draft. He didn't, though; it wasn't worth giving up a bunch of picks to get a No. 1. Remember, however, that the Colts have two No. 1s next year: They own Tampa Bay's after dumping Chris Chandler on the Bucs. The Colts might get some help from this draft from No. 2 pick Shane Curry, a speedy pass-rusher from Miami. **Grade: C-**

AFC CENTRAL

PITTSBURGH STEELERS Accomplished: The Steelers are on the verge of very good things—they really are—and they had a very good draft. Most assumed that they would go for a wide receiver in the first round to play opposite Louis Lipps, but in a

draft that featured one bizarre moment after another Pittsburgh popped in there with defensive end Huey Richardson with the 15th pick. The Steelers had only 34 sacks in '90, a figure that must go up, and Richardson is a versatile player who can learn all about the nuances of the pass rush from assistant coach Mean Joe Greene.

Best move: This was a wide receiver draft, and the Steelers had a wide receiver need. They gambled by taking Richardson in the first round that a quality wideout would slip down to them in round two, and they were right. Ohio State's Jeff Graham, who was a first-rounder in many projections, was still around after 45 other players were taken, and who says he won't be as good or better than the five wide receivers that went ahead of him? Just in case, the Steelers went for Florida wideout Ernie Mills in the third round. **Grade: B**



In true Raiders fashion, Davis was interested in Marinovich's payoff, not his troubled past.

CLEVELAND BROWNS Accomplished: This is still Bernie Kosar's team, and the only way for the Browns to show any improvement this year—other than having an incredibly organized new coach in Bill Belichick—is by keeping Kosar upright and healthy. That's why the Browns very much wanted to trade down from their No. 2 post

position to take either of the Tennessee offensive tackles, Charles McRae or Antone Davis. The feeling was taking either at No. 2 was too high; the last tackle to go that high was Tony Mandarich in '89, and he's been so impressive Green Bay is thinking of switching him to guard. Anyway, the Browns couldn't deal, surprised everyone by taking safety Eric Turner, and went for help on the line in round two with Auburn junior guard Ed King. **Best move:** We have to assume, based on his pedigree, that Belichick knows blue-chip defensive players. As the draft got closer, Turner became the hottest player in it. All of a sudden, you kept hearing the Ronnie Lott comparisons. For the Browns' sake, it better be true. This was the highest a defensive back was taken in 35 years.

Grade: B-

CINCINNATI BENGALS Accomplished: Scouting is funny. Some teams have incredibly

large staffs, digging for information that, in the end, everybody else will have anyway. The Bengals have a mom-and-pop operation, rely heavily on the combine reports, and then sit back and take the same players they would have if they spent millions preparing. Last year they came up with two top rookies in linebacker James Francis and running back Harold Green. This year they sat tight at No. 18, went by the reports, and grabbed linebacker Alfred Williams. **Best move:** Maybe the Bengals way is the right way. They are loaded with talent. Williams is an explosive pass-rusher who will help a defense that had an NFL-low 25 sacks. Williams had 35½ sacks in his career at Colorado. Now, if Sam Wyche will stop crusading against NFL establishment and concentrate on coaching his team, the Bengals can get back in the Super Bowl. **Grade: C+**

HOUSTON OILERS Accomplished: The Oilers kissed the first round goodbye two days before the draft: They traded the No. 17 pick to New England and bailed out, and it cost them. The Oilers were very hot for Ohio State cornerback Vinnie Clark and figured he would be there at No. 28, the spot they picked up from the Patriots. Wrong. Clark, another player who was moving up in the days before the draft, went at No. 19 to the Packers. **Best move:** The Oilers did have



In McGwire, Seattle got a man guaranteed to stand tall in the pocket.

three second-round picks. At Nos. 28 and 38, respectively, they took free safety Mike Dumas and cornerback Darryll Lewis, both solid picks for a not-so-solid secondary. They also grabbed massive center John Flannery at No. 44. **Grade: C**

AFC WEST

DENVER BRONCOS Accomplished: The Broncos tried hard to move up from their No. 4 spot in the first round. They would have liked to have The Rocket, but when they couldn't get to No. 1 they tried to jump to Cleveland at No. 2 to get ahead of Atlanta—they wanted linebacker Mike Croel or cornerback Todd Lyght—but the Browns wanted a second-round pick to switch. So the Broncos stayed put, and good thing, too. Because of the Maryland-Turner-Pickens trifecta, the Broncos had their choice of Croel or Lyght, and they went with the bigger player. **Best move:** All of the Broncos' early picks made sense. Croel is made for the 3-4 defense. Tight end Reggie Johnson fills a big need in a spot where Denver has had problem players. Linebacker Keith Traylor is a huge hitter. Wide receiver Derek Russell fits in well

with the Three Amigos. The Broncos still have a ways to go, but this was a good start.

Grade: B

LOS ANGELES RAIDERS Accomplished: Al Davis doesn't have to answer to anybody but Al Davis, so he can afford to gamble. If all his moves work out, the Raiders are going to be a force. Gambles? Todd Marinovich was arrested for cocaine possession in January, though charges would be dropped upon completion of a 12-month drug-counseling program. Running back Nick Bell slipped further than any player in the draft; he went from as high as No. 8 all the way down to No. 33. And Ismail must still be enticed to leave the CFL because he has a guaranteed \$4.5 million a year coming his little way. **Best move:** Davis isn't that smart. Everyone else is just dumb. At the worst, The Rocket's CFL contract is up in November 1994, and the Raiders hold his exclusive negotiating rights until the '95 draft and right of first refusal after that. Look for The Rocket in silver and black within two years. **Grade: B**

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS Accomplished: Chuck Knox, going into the final year of his contract, was given a two-year extension after the draft. He knew it was coming, so he

could afford to take quarterback Dan McGwire in the first round and wait for him to develop without worrying about job security. The Hawks obviously have given up on Kelly Stouffer, and how much longer can Knox put up with Dave Krieg? **Best move:** McGwire can throw it out of the Kingdom, but he's just a raw talent with lots of ability. The newly liberalized in-the-grasp rules will certainly benefit McGwire; in case you forgot, he's 6'8", 243, and a bit difficult to bring down. Drafting McGwire and then speed receiver Doug Thomas in the second round means Knox finally is ready to open up the offense, and that will make owner Ken Behring very happy. **Grade: B**

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS Accomplished: OK, you say the Chiefs have a thunderous backfield with Christian Okoye and Barry Word, who combined for 1,820 yards and 11 rushing touchdowns in 1990. So, you're probably thinking: The last thing Kansas City is going to do in the first round is take a running back. Wrong. Marty Schottenheimer got locked in on LSU's Harvey Williams when he coached him in the Senior Bowl. Williams is tremendously talented, but often injured. He's different than Okoye or Word, but his presence makes one of them expendable. **Best move:** You must assume that Schottenheimer and GM Carl Peterson have a plan. The Chiefs are ready for the Super Bowl and didn't need another running back to get them there, so something must give. Look for Okoye or Word to be packaged for a quarterback. If that happens, then taking Williams makes sense. **Grade: C+**

SAN DIEGO CHARGERS Accomplished: Bobby Beathard just isn't happy having first-round picks. During the '90 draft he tried to trade this year's No. 1 to take either guard Keith Sims or running back Harold Green, but he couldn't do it and wound up this year with safety Stanley Richard, a big reach at No. 9. However, Beathard was happy when he traded next year's No. 1 to the Skins for a No. 2 in this draft. He took 300-pound Michigan State guard Eric Moten, the 47th pick. We don't like it at all. Players like Moten show up every year. **Best move:** The Chargers have the big backs in Marion Butts and Rod Bernstine. Colorado's Eric Bieniemy was a productive back in a big-time program, and a second-round steal. The second round—Beathard's favorite round. **Grade: C-**

NFC EAST

DALLAS COWBOYS Accomplished: In the mid-to-late '80s the Cowboys were not a well-liked team in the NFL. Nobody wanted to trade with them. However, that changed once Jerry Jones and Jimmy Johnson took over. In the JJs' first 26 months Dallas made 29 trades, and the Cowboys were all over

the place in this draft, trading up, trading down, and helping Ismail make up his mind to take the money and run to Canada. Johnson is not afraid to pull the trigger. The huge returns on the Herschel Walker and Steve Walsh trades have given him amazing maneuverability. And in this draft, he picked up a run stuffer in Russell Maryland, a big-play receiver for Troy Aikman in Alvin Harper, and the kind of quick linebacker he likes in Dixon Edwards. After 10 picks in the first four rounds, Dallas will be a team you can hate again real soon. **Best move:** They traded the 11th and 41st picks to the Patriots, plus three players Johnson did not want—linebackers Eugene Lockhart and David Howard and cornerback Ron Francis—to move up to the top spot. Johnson swears he never wanted The Rocket. If Ismail had agreed to terms, the Cowboys were going to offer him to Cleveland and Atlanta, but Johnson insists he was not going to take him. He wanted Maryland, who is small but makes plays, all along. Maryland, Harper, and Edwards start right away. The sleeper could be running back Curvin Richards, who left Pitt a year early. He has first-round ability and was a steal in the fourth. **Grade: B+**

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES Accomplished: Randall Cunningham was sacked an average of three times a game last year and five times in the playoff loss to Washington. Tennessee quarterbacks were sacked only 10 times last year. So, it made good sense for the Eagles to trade up from No. 19 to No. 8 to get mammoth tackle Antone Davis as their Cunningham protector. The Eagles also lucked out in the second round when safety Jesse Campbell was still on the board. Campbell, a junior who left North Carolina State with a year of eligibility remaining, is better than either of the Eagles' starting safeties, Andre Waters or Wes Hopkins. **Best move:** The Eagles did not address their running back problems, but maybe Davis takes care of that by creating holes that weren't there before. Did the Birds pay too big a price by giving up their 1992 No. 1 to the Packers to move up the 11 spots? New coach Rich Kotite has been told: Win a playoff game. The Eagles have been eliminated in the first round three straight years. Kotite didn't care about next year's No. 1 when Davis was there, and the Packers were willing to deal. **Grade: B**

NEW YORK GIANTS Accomplished: Power football wins. Bill Parcells may have worn out his pet expression after the Super Bowl, but it's still true. Control the ball offensively, knock people's heads off defensively, and you win two Super Bowls in five years. So, who was surprised when Parcells added some beef to his backfield with Michigan fullback Jarrod Bunch, a 248-pounder who

can block and run? Bunch and Rodney Hampton, in a year or so, will form the most complete backfield in the NFL. **Best move:** You knew that after losing the Hampton-Darion Conner argument last year Parcells was going to lobby hard for an early-round linebacker, and he got Colorado's Kanavis McGhee in the second round. McGhee's a bit of a project—many teams consider him strictly a pass-rusher who will be better as a down lineman—but Parcells has a way with linebackers, and McGhee will be groomed to take over for Lawrence Taylor—not as good, of course, but that will be his role. The Giants weighed McGhee and wide receiver Ed McCaffrey in the second round. They took McGhee and got McCaffrey in the third. He's 6'5" and may be the next Gary Collins or Boyd Dowler. **Grade: B-**

WASHINGTON REDSKINS Accomplished: It was such a pleasant sight to see the Skins back in the opening round. They had been gone since 1983, and this was just the fifth No. 1 pick they held on to in the last 23 years. It's funny, because their last three No. 1s were all solid: Art Monk, Mark May, and Darrell Green. This time, they traded up a few spots in the first to get Michigan State defensive tackle Bobby Wilson. He will immediately improve the run defense. The Skins made a smart move jumping three spots to get Wilson before Cincinnati or Green Bay could, but the player they really wanted was linebacker Huey Richardson. They missed him by two spots. **Best move:** Bobby Beathard is still having a positive influence on the Redskins. He helped build teams that got to three Super Bowls before he left for San Diego, and he seems intent on helping Washington get back to the big show. The Redskins traded their No. 2 pick, 47th overall, and next year's No. 5 to the Chargers for San Diego's No. 1 pick next year. That means Washington will have two No. 1s next year. That calls for a commissioner investigation. **Grade: B-**

PHOENIX CARDINALS Accomplished: They roll off the tongue like vinegar: Clyde Duncan, Anthony Bell, Kelly Stouffer . . . The Cardinals' first-round drafting failures have been among the worst in the league. You always can be certain of one thing: The Cardinals will do something to shock you in the first round. Eric Swann is a great story, but whether he turns out to be a great player is something else. He's 6'3", 311 pounds, and an amazing athlete, but he didn't play college ball. He only dominated with the minor league and now-defunct Bay State Titans. How can you take him sixth? If you have that strong a conviction on him, at least trade down and grab some extra choices. If he hits it big-time the Cards will look smart, but, oh, that track record. **Best move:** The Cardinals make a good move? Well, they

did. We're not saying Swann can't play, just that they took him too high. They must really love him if Joe Bugel, the architect of the Hogs in Washington, passed up the Tennessee tackles, Charles McRae and Antone Davis. In fact, the Cardinals spent their first five picks on that sievelike defense. **Grade: C**

NFC CENTRAL

DETROIT LIONS Accomplished: You have to like what Wayne Fontes has in mind: Tone down that run-and-shoot and build the offense around Barry Sanders, the best running back in the league. Get him a tight end and a fullback to block and get some normal-size wide receivers. The Lions are phasing out the midget wideouts, which will make quarterbacks Rodney Peete and Andre Ware happy. Detroit took Virginia's Herman Moore in the first round and UTEP's Reggie Barrett in the third. Both are taller than 6'2". In the Silverdome, you won't need your magnifying glass to see the wideouts anymore. **Best move:** The Lions wanted Moore in the first round. They also wanted defensive tackle Kelvin Pritchett. What to do? Get both. Even though the Lions front office was a little confused, with different execs making different offers to the same team, Detroit managed to get a second No. 1 pick from Dallas and get Pritchett. They gave up picks in the second, third, and fourth rounds. Good deal. Watch out for the Lions. **Grade: B+**

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS Accomplished: Now that Ray Perkins is gone, the Bucs might do business. Of course, they still have to get over his silly trade of next year's No. 1 to the Colts for Chris Chandler. Anyway, personnel director Jerry Angelo is calling the shots now, and although the Bucs wanted safety Eric Turner, they recouped nicely with tackle Charles McRae, who makes a nice pair with Paul Gruber. And third-round fullback Robert Wilson will be a solid blocker for Gary Anderson and Reggie Cobb, who is moving to tailback. **Best move:** Not panicking. They wanted Turner, but Cleveland took him second. Then they really wanted McRae, though they would have settled for Davis, and there was a chance both could be gone. However, they stayed put, not willing to give up any more draft choices, and then—surprise—they ended up with their choice of McRae or Davis. **Grade: B**

GREEN BAY PACKERS Accomplished: The best thing the Pack can do is make sure Don Majkowski is healthy, because their draft was nothing to get excited about. They traded down 11 spots in the first round after the top defensive backs were gone and took Ohio State's Vinnie Clark, a so-so pick. The third-round gamble of Chuck Webb could



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- ☐ 7558 Rickey Henderson
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- ☐ 7544 Dale Murphy
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- ☐ 7540 Gary Sheffield
- ☐ 7593 Ozzie Smith
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- ☐ 7598 Vince Coleman
- ☐ 7574 Ryne Sandberg
- ☐ 7595 Andre Dawson
- ☐ 7508 Mark Grace
- ☐ 7504 Jerome Walton
- ☐ 7552 Kirk Gibson
- ☐ 7512 Orel Hershisier
- ☐ 7592 Will Clark
- ☐ 7533 Kevin Mitchell
- ☐ 7516 Ken Griffey, Jr.
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- ☐ 7550 Kevin Elster

- ☐ 7503 Bobby Bonilla
- ☐ 7513 Andy Van Slyke
- ☐ 7590 Eric Davis
- ☐ 7500 Chris Sabo
- ☐ 7534 Barry Larkin
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pay off big if he's healthy. He's a first-round talent. **Best move:** Stocking up for '92, a draft that can't help but be better than this one. The Packers, picking eighth, wanted Bruce Pickens or Todd Lyght. Both were gone, though, so their options were taking a tackle and moving the world's biggest bust, Tony Mandarich, inside to guard, or trading down. There was nobody else they had a real strong conviction about, so when the call came from the desperate Eagles, who wanted Antone Davis, the Packers listened and were happy to hear that the Birds were willing to bail out of the first round next year. Done deal. **Grade: C**

CHICAGO BEARS Accomplished: The Bears draft was epitomized by their sixth-round goof. They took Texas A&M running back Darren Lewis, the only player to test positive for drugs at the combine. The Bears got the results like everybody else, but got confused and marked it down next to the wrong player. They later admitted they wouldn't have taken Lewis if they were aware he was the one who tested positive. Dumb. Otherwise, they got a tackle, Stan Thomas, in the first round who has had some physical problems, and kicker/punter Chris Gardocki in the third, who had a 78-yard punt and 57-yard FG last year. **Best move:** Mike Ditka was talking about taking Notre Dame defensive tackle Chris Zorich in the first round.

That was silly, but the guy is perfect for Ditka: a real Grabowski, a get-down-and-dirty kind of guy who will get playing time with Dan Hampton's retirement. Ditka finally has another player who plays the game like he did. **Grade: C**

MINNESOTA VIKINGS Accomplished: This draft, again, was spent on Herschel Walker. In fact, next year's is, too. That's when the Vikings stop paying the Cowboys their first and second picks. Three straight years of it has destroyed the guts of Minnesota's drafts, but we might begin to see dividends this year. Jerry Burns, two years later, has realized Walker runs best from the I-formation and as a one-back and plans to use him that way. If Burns sticks to this, there's no reason Walker can't rush for 1,200 yards. **Best move:** The draft was eight hours old—64 players had been selected—and then it was Minnesota's turn. They took

linebacker Carlos Jenkins and then three spots later wide receiver Jake Reed. Are you excited yet? **Grade: D**

NFC WEST

ATLANTA FALCONS Accomplished: Hey, maybe Jerry Glanville does know what he's doing. The NFL is all about four wide



Lyght may have slipped down to Los Angeles at No. 5, but he's No. 1 with Mom and Dad.

receivers and coming up with defensive backs who can cover them, and Glanville is cornering the market on corners. On the morning of the draft he paid the cheap price of 3rd- and 12th-round pick to Miami for loudmouth corner Tim McKyer and then still took Nebraska cornerback Bruce Pickens with the third overall pick. Along with Deion Sanders, this is an arrogant trio—and that's good. On the other side of the ball, Mike Pritchard will be a nice complement to Andre Rison in the red gun offense. **Best move:** The Falcons almost took quarterback Brett Favre at the No. 13 spot. Everybody knew they needed a backup to Chris Miller, who is coming off a broken collarbone, but they went for Pritchard instead and then prayed Favre would be around for their second-round pick—and he was. Atlanta really lucked out because the Jets, one spot behind, were calling every-

body trying to move up for Favre. They couldn't and settled for Browning Nagle. **Grade: A**

LOS ANGELES RAMS Accomplished: What's the best thing to do if you have the No. 27 pass defense? Either get a pass-rusher or a cornerback. The Rams wanted Russell Maryland, the defensive tackle from Miami, but not only was he more of a run stopper than rusher, but he went first to Dallas after the Cowboys moved up. However, the Rams lucked out when Notre Dame's Todd Lyght not only dropped to fifth, but inexplicably became the third defensive back taken. He becomes an immediate starter in that L.A. secondary. **Best move:** It's hard to understand why the Rams didn't use a quality pick on a defensive lineman. New defensive coordinator Jeff Fisher is switching to a 4-3 and will move Kevin Greene to end because of a lack of linemen. At least the Rams kept loading up on defensive players. Their No. 2 pick, linebacker Roman Phifer, was coveted by many teams. **Grade: B**

SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS Accomplished: At long last, a dinner companion for Bubba Paris. Ted Washington, who checks in at more than 300 pounds, can match Bubba cheeseburger for cheeseburger. Washington will be used behind Michael Carter—no lightweight himself—at nose tackle. The 49ers, picking 25th, tried unsuccessfully to deal up in the first round to get Washington, fearing he wouldn't last past the 18th pick. But there he was, cheeseburgers and all, when their turn came. **Best move:** Actually, it was not trading Steve Young. There were pre-draft rumors of Young going to Kansas City for Christian Okoye, and the Chargers had offered a trade the 49ers were willing to accept if Young wanted to go. But he didn't. Instead, he signed a two-year, \$4.5 million deal. Good thing for the 49ers, because Joe Montana suddenly looks vulnerable. **Grade: C+**

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS Accomplished: If Steve Walsh becomes a productive quarterback, then this draft is OK. The Saints gave up their first and third picks this year and a No. 2 that can change to a No. 1 next year if they make the Super Bowl to Dallas for Walsh. We can forget the Super Bowl part, but if Walsh doesn't get New Orleans into the playoffs this trade was a bust. **Best move:** Walsh can't throw deep, so there's no need to pick up a burner for him. Miami wide receiver Wesley Carroll is an excellent intermediate target, and he also can return kicks. Not bad for round two. Draft day was a quiet day in N'awlins. **Grade: C**

GARY MYERS is relieved the draft is over for another year; now he can put away his magnifying glass. Gary contributed to our "NFL Hot Questions" section in July.

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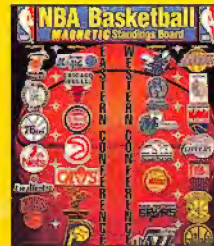
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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

QUICK—SOMEBODY ALERT the media. Marty Schottenheimer, heretofore known as the blandest man in North America, has gone weird on us. He's laughing. He's joking. He's—heaven help us—dancing.

"Listen to this," he says, popping a selection into the CD player. "Now *this* is music."

Dave Redding, the Chiefs conditioning and strength coach, and a handful of players hanging around the workout facility wince in anticipation. What's Marty going to play? Chamber music? Ferrante and Teicher? Gregorian chanting? Or how about some Juice Newton?

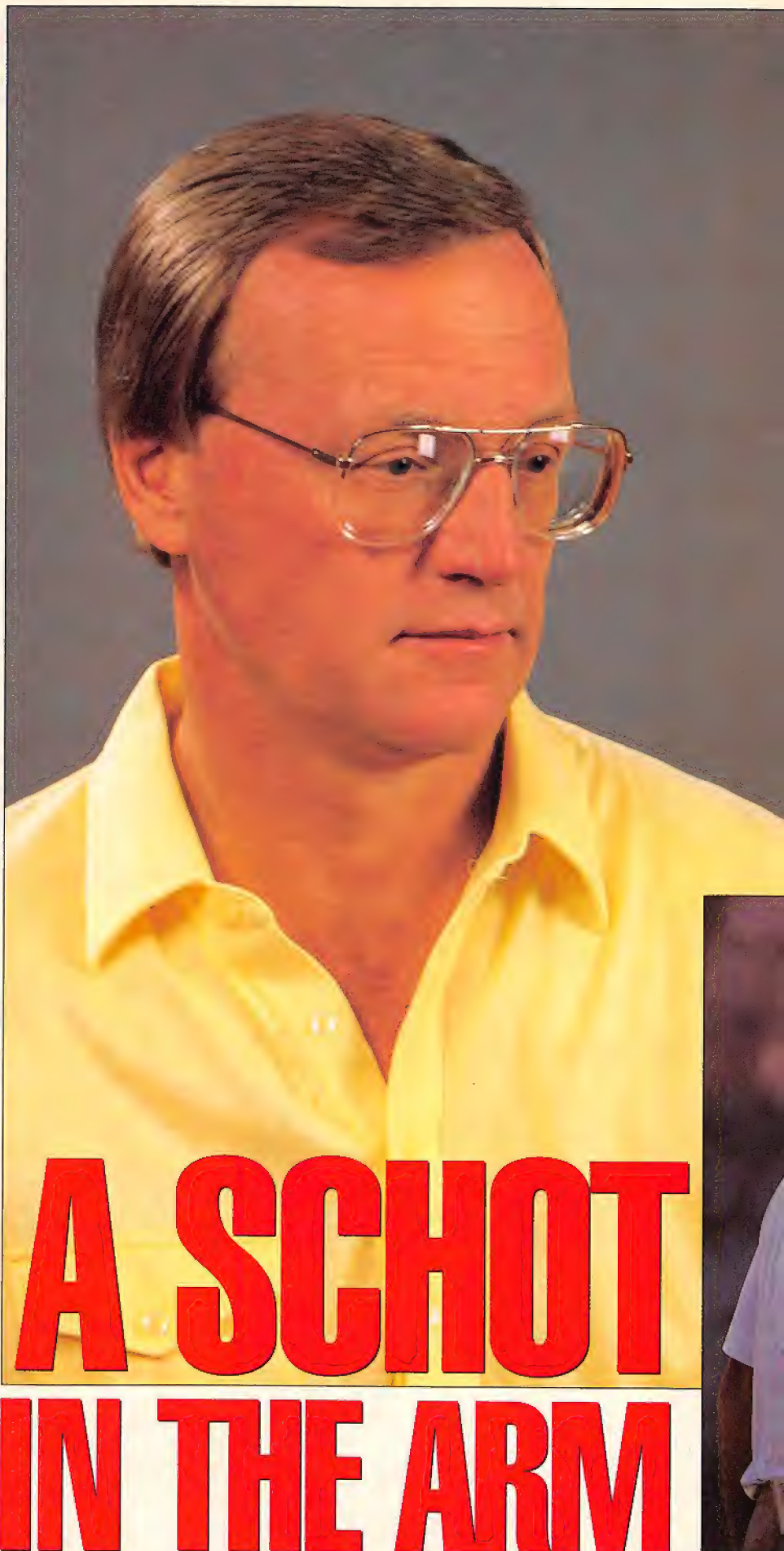
Suddenly, the music blares. First you hear the dulcet tones of Aretha Franklin. Then you hear Schottenheimer, in a wounded falsetto that would have had Noriega fleeing from the compound within 10 minutes: *What you want . . . bab-ee I got it . . . ooh . . . What you need . . . you know I got it . . . ooh . . .*

Redding rolls his eyes. Schottenheimer bumps and grinds and does the old "Solid Gold Dancer" routine. Something is terribly amiss here. The Chiefs coach, best known to media and football people as a stolid, earnest, somewhat colorless soul, is blowing his hard-earned reputation to bits. *R-E-S-P-E-C-T, find out what it means to me . . .* Schottenheimer croons. Paint peels off the weight room walls. Thousands flee. A preconceived notion crashes and burns.

"I don't think I'm that boring," he says later. "But no, I'm not a Buddy Ryan or a Jerry Glanville." Of course not. But, then, would Ryan or Glanville have spent a few moments that afternoon having his picture taken at a local department store with the Easter Bunny? "They're one of our sponsors," Schottenheimer says simply.

If the man's reputation has taken a beating—no, he's not an automaton, as those who really know him found out long ago—one reputation endures: He's a winner. He took over the Cleveland Browns for the fired Sam Rutigliano in 1984 and laid the foundation for four winning seasons, including two AFC Championship Game appearances. Then, after a rather messy parting of the ways with owner Art Modell and the team in December 1988, Schottenheimer moved to Kansas City, where he has helped make a playoff contender out of a franchise that hadn't seen any glory days since Hank Stram had his own hair.

"Marty Schottenheimer will do in the '90s what Don Shula did in the '70s and '80s,"





*With sincerity, hard work,
and a lot of emotion, Marty
Schottenheimer has lifted
the young, talented Chiefs
into Super Bowl contention.
Now he's got to show his
team—and himself—
how to take the next step*

By BOB KRAVITZ

says Dick Vermeil, the former Eagles coach who broadcasts Chiefs preseason games. "He has what it takes to reach that level. He has the personality and the firmness of purpose you see in all great coaches.

"I put coaches into three categories. There are coaches whose teams win in spite of them. There are coaches who kind of go along for the ride because there are terrific players in place. And there are coaches whose teams win because of the coach. Marty's teams win because of the coach."

However, one niggling little doubt remains: While Schottenheimer has taken his teams to the playoffs, while he has brought them close to the prize, he has not yet hurdled that last great obstacle and made it to the Super Bowl. In 1986 his Browns lost to the Broncos in Cleveland Stadium on The Drive that marked John Elway's coming of age. The next year his Browns overcame a huge deficit at Mile High Stadium and were poised to tie the game when The Fumble, Earnest Byner's goal-line gaffe, dashed those dreams. And last year, his Chiefs were on the cusp of playoff advancement, leading Miami rather comfortably, when, once again, opportunity slipped ignominiously away.

At the time of his departure, the word in Cleveland was, "Good enough to get you there; not good enough to get you over the top." The word in Kansas City: "That's ridiculous."

Schottenheimer says the rap doesn't bother him. "I will say this: In my six seasons, five times we've been 4-3 after seven games," he says. "So we've won a lot of games at the end. What we need to do is figure out how to win a few at the start and keep the strong finish."

The question will dog Schottenheimer until his dream is realized. He is fond of telling his players, "See the gleam, men," referring to the gleam off the Lombardi Trophy. His Chiefs won 11 games last year with Steve DeBerg—an ancient, injured quarterback in the midst of a career year—a buffalo backfield of Christian Okoye and Barry Word, and one of the National Football League's fiercest young defenses, led by linebacker Derrick Thomas. At some point, though, making the playoffs will not be enough.

"Marty will get them to the Super Bowl," says Vermeil. "It took my team [the Eagles] five years. I think this team is at least a year ahead of that schedule."

YOU EXPECT A PLAY-CALLING machine. You expect nuts and bolts and piston rings and "Coaching 101" platitudes. And, indeed, there are times when Schottenheimer reserves for the public only that small piece of his personality—

and doctors have confirmed there is one—that is related to football. In this age of self-aggrandizement, Schottenheimer fails as a showman, relying instead on time-honored bromides and the football basics that have carried the perennials—folks such as Chuck Noll and Don Shula—through the decades. Schtick just isn't his schtick, and likely never

ingrained in him he becomes emotional, and you can feel it, you can see it. None of the players felt like it was a 'win one for the Gipper' type of thing where he's just trying to fire us up. You can tell it's coming from the heart."

Schottenheimer's soul is never bared so publicly as it is on cut day. All coaches dislike

lobbied for more playing time, but insisted he could run a 40-yard dash in less than five seconds.

"I would not accept the five-flat he kept telling me I was running," Schottenheimer says. "I'd go up to him and say, 'C'mon, I'm ready to run it now.' One night I must have run it a half a dozen times just to show him,



Schottenheimer's teams, as illustrated by Kevin Ross' scuttling of this Raider, have a never-say-die style.

will be. Of course, nobody ever confused Shula with Jonathan Winters, either.

"Why try and be something I'm not?" Schottenheimer says. "That's just not me." Adds one Kansas City reporter: "Marty will never write your story for you with a bunch of good quips, but he's very forthright, and he'll never lie to you. That's saying something when you're talking about NFL coaches."

"He's not a laugh a minute, but he's not dull, either," says Vermeil. "He's just very, very sincere. I'm not saying the way Jerry Glanville does it is wrong, but Marty is Marty, and that wouldn't be him. He's not a self-promoter."

If Schottenheimer isn't going to audition for "Comic Strip Live," he might find a spot on one of those daytime soaps. Just ask his players, former and current: There is not a more emotional coach anywhere. Ozzie Newsome, the former Browns great, once told reporters: "This probably sounds cold, but at training camp the players used to have a pool going trying to predict when Marty would break down and cry. Football is so

cutting players, but with Schottenheimer it's like cutting away a part of himself. After a sterling high school career—his high school basketball title team remains a Pennsylvania legend—and a notable stint at the University of Pittsburgh, Schottenheimer bounced around the American Football League, the NFL, and finally the World Football League, mostly as a back-up linebacker. He knows what it's like to sit on the bubble, to wonder whether the coaches have noticed, to wonder whether you've made it. And so it happens: The tears flow, and they come from the heart. It happens when he cuts a proud veteran, when he drops an overachieving young player, when he sees a bit of the despair he felt mirrored in the eyes of the vanquished.

As a pro player, Schottenheimer was your basic hard-nosed, intelligent linebacker with no footspeed. He started only a handful of games in six years, making his mark more as a kamikaze attacker on special teams. However, that never stopped him from bothering his coach with the Buffalo Bills, Joe Collier. He not only constantly

and I never broke five-flat. He just walked off the field and said, 'That's enough.'"

Schottenheimer still doesn't understand Collier's explanation for relegating him to a reserve role after a strong preseason. "I told him, 'I've made far more tackles than the other guy,'" Schottenheimer says. "And he said, 'Yeah, but he has the ability to make people run toward other guys who will make the tackle.' I said, 'Huh? What does that mean?' I didn't understand that at all."

Life as a back-up, though, prepared Schottenheimer for his current calling. He is not alone in that, of course; most top-flight coaches were little more than cerebral, overachieving second-stringers during their playing careers. Schottenheimer, always a quick study, used his time as a reserve to survey the big picture. In fact, Schottenheimer clearly remembers taking copious notes and being influenced by Noll's blocking philosophies during his six-week tryout with the Pittsburgh Steelers. Adds Collier: "He was the smartest linebacker I ever coached."

Indeed, the game is played with the head,

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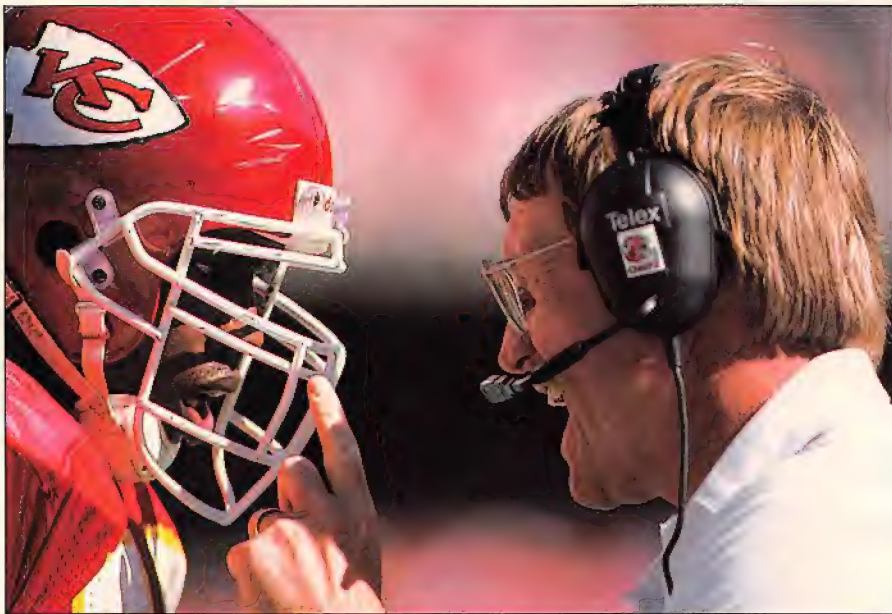
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The coach leads with his heart, and his players love it—and respond.

and no coach is more consumed with preparation and attention to minute details. However, Schottenheimer has proved, both as a player and a head coach, that the game is also played with the heart.

A STATUE OF AN AVIATOR stands on his desk, an emblem of Schottenheimer's avocation, flying. On the coffee table sits a symbol of his other great passion: a book on the world's great golf courses. He walks over to the office window, which overlooks Arrowhead Stadium, and watches one of his greatest joys: his son, Brian—he and his wife, Pat, also have a daughter, Kristen, attending Miami (Ohio)—practicing his quarterbacking skills with a friend.

The bird's-eye view renders him sentimental. How long ago, he wonders, was he so poor that his mother-in-law had to send them money to buy the kids Christmas presents? How long ago was he glad-handing his coaching idols at clinics and offering his scouting services for a song?

After Schottenheimer retired in 1971, he and his family moved to Miami, and later Denver, where he embarked on a real estate career. He was 30, but football was still a part of him. He often visited his old coach, Collier, who was then the Broncos defensive coordinator. So Collier made some calls, and Schottenheimer joined the Portland Storm of the WFL as a player-coach. The player part ended quickly because of a shoulder injury, but Schottenheimer remained an assistant coach.

"Only thing was, the last eight weeks there, each weekly check bounced higher than the one the week before," Schottenheimer recalls. "So I'm keeping a residence

in Portland, I've got the house in Denver, and we're broke—absolutely broke. But I wanted to coach. So my wife took a job and I stayed home, taking care of the kids and preparing résumés. So I decide I'm going to go to the Senior Bowl. I scrape up enough cash to fly down there, and Richie McCabe, bless his soul, lets me stay in his room."

There, Schottenheimer met Bill Arnsparger, then the Giants coach, and volunteered to do a personnel evaluation of all WFL players. Arnsparger said he'd think about it; meanwhile, Schottenheimer was back in Denver calling pro and college coaches, writing résumés, getting rejected, wondering where the money was going to come from. "I finally told my wife, 'If nothing comes along by April 1, we'll get back into real estate,'" he says.

A few months later, Arnsparger said he'd gladly accept the WFL evaluation (the thick report remains at arm's reach, in Schottenheimer's drawer, even today) and would pay \$1,500—or so Schottenheimer thought. Three weeks later, Arnsparger sent a note saying what a wonderful job had been done. Enclosed was a check for, uh, \$125. It turns out Arnsparger had said, "Fifty or a hundred," not "fifteen hundred." Schottenheimer was crushed. But in late March, two days before his return to real estate, Arnsparger signed him on as an assistant coach—for \$24,000. Really.

After one season in New York, Schottenheimer moved on to the Detroit Lions and stayed there for two years. Next, he became Rutigliano's defensive coordinator in Cleveland for 4½ years before taking the Browns' top job with the club reeling at 1-7. He quickly accomplished in Cleveland what he has accomplished in Kansas City: laying a

foundation, changing a mindset, doing things his way.

"The personality of this team—and the coaches have everything to do with it—is that nobody gives up on anything," said Browns linebacker Mike Johnson back in 1988. "Whether it's lifting in the weight room, practicing on the field, or playing in the fourth quarter when we're up or down by a couple of points, we are relentless."

However, four near-misses in the post-season tested the ownership's patience, and a town hungry for its first championship since 1964 became testy.

There was criticism of Schottenheimer's decision to double as the offensive coordinator, taking over after Lindy Infante's departure to Green Bay in '88. There was criticism of his hiring of his brother, Kurt, who oversaw the special teams. And there was criticism of Schottenheimer's personal style, often viewed as cool and imperious.

Only days after their first-round playoff loss to the Houston Oilers in 1988, a season in which the Browns made the playoffs using four different quarterbacks because of injuries, Schottenheimer and Modell agreed to disagree and parted company. Modell wanted the coach to fire some of his assistants and reassign some others, including his brother. Schottenheimer refused. Modell felt the coach had become too big for his britches.

"I think everything changed with Marty when I approved his going on the league's competition committee [in 1986]," Modell said shortly after Schottenheimer's departure. "He just totally changed as a person, his whole personality. All of a sudden, he's socializing with the elite in the league, the Tex Schramms and Paul Browns and Don Shulas, and his whole attitude changed. Suddenly, it's as if he thinks he has all the answers. It was very noticeable: He was right, and everybody else was wrong."

Vermeil laughs when he hears that rationale. "That sounds familiar," he says. "When I took the Eagles to the Super Bowl, they said it was because of my work ethic. When we lost the Super Bowl, they said it was because of my work ethic."

There are, however, few residual hard feelings. Schottenheimer absolutely, positively refuses to gloat about the juxtaposition of his success and the Browns' demise; he speaks fondly of Modell as an old ally who gave him his first head coaching job. "What possible good could come of taking shots at them?" he asks. Modell, too, speaks only in glowing terms about his old coach.

"It all came down to loyalty," says Chiefs defensive coordinator Bill Cowher. "Marty refused to abandon his assistant coaches when he was pressured to do it. You look around the league—that's the way a lot of

head coaches keep their jobs. They just drop all their assistants to appease the owner. But Marty refused to do that, and that's one of the reasons this staff has such loyalty to him."

THAT GAME. THAT DAMNABLE Miami playoff game. It was the Chiefs' all the way: up 16-3, dominant, pounding the ball down the Dolphins' throats. There were so many chances to put them away, bury them, make it impossible for even Dan Marino to come back.

Schottenheimer rarely dwells on the past, but that loss was bitter. That one stung. However, there are no regrets about eschewing Nick Lowery field goal attempts into the wind, about passing in the waning moments of the game, about anything specific. This was one that just got away—and it still rankles.

"Oh, yeah, we could have gone all the way last year," he says, "but I look back and hey, we got what we deserved. You go on the road and have a chance to put a team away and don't do it, you're probably going to lose. We're not so much frustrated as we are angry. Everybody in the organization was. Hopefully, this is all part of the evolution of a championship team."

Clearly, the foundation has been laid. The Chiefs are almost everybody's favorites to

win the AFC West, and why not? The Raiders don't know Bo anymore, the Broncos are a wild card after a precipitous fall last year, the Seahawks are the Seahawks, and the Chargers still don't have a quarterback. The important thing is that the Chiefs, like his old Browns, keep knocking on the door. Success is now expected. And with generous ownership of Lamar Hunt and strong player evaluation people, most notably GM Carl Peterson, it is likely to be a long run.

In just two years—this is Schottenheimer's third in Kansas City—Schottenheimer's offense has developed similarly to his offense in Cleveland. When he began in Cleveland he was left with an unproven quarterback in Bernie Kosar and therefore went with an ultraconservative game plan that featured two 1,000-yard rushers. As Kosar improved, though, Martyball—as it was derisively termed—came out of its shell, and the club opened things up. The same thing's happening in Kansas City. DeBerg has won Schottenheimer's trust and admiration, and the game plan is no longer diagrammed on a cocktail napkin.

Kansas City under Schottenheimer mirrors Cleveland during his tenure there: The Chiefs have a work ethic. They are focused. They are resilient, playing their best after difficult losses. And they are nearly unbeatable down the stretch in the regular season.

"It took some time, but I can pinpoint that moment when I felt like we'd really turned a corner as a football team," Schottenheimer says. "It was in 1989 after we'd lost a tough, tough game to the Denver Broncos; they kicked a field goal with no time left and beat us."

"I remember going into the locker room after that game and saying: 'Guys, I know this is going to sound crazy, but this is the kind of thing that breeds champions, because you feel such a sense of frustration you're not going to want to endure this kind of frustration again.' Since then, we've really shown the ability to come back and play well after a tough loss."

Still, there are questions: Can DeBerg repeat his remarkable 1990 season? How will Schottenheimer make room for the two jumbos—Okoye and Word—in an elephant backfield that makes room for just one? And will Schottenheimer, the best active coach never to compete in a Super Bowl, finally grab his Holy Grail?

R-E-S-P-E-C-T is one thing. A Super Bowl—well, that threatens to get the man singing and dancing again. ■

Denver sports columnist BOB KRAVITZ has found that humming "Rocky Mountain High" speeds up his creative process immensely. Bob profiled the new-look Nuggets in January.

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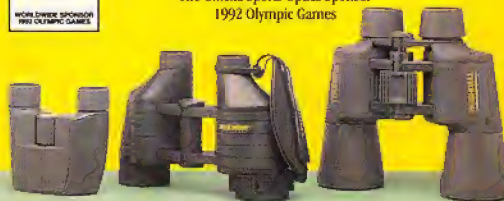
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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

FLORIDA STATE

1 STRENGTHS: The Seminoles are loaded—everywhere. You want offense? How about four deep at quarterback, beginning with Casey Weldon and Brad Johnson as No. 1 and No. 2? Tailback? Amp Lee is the power source. Last year as a sophomore, Lee rushed for 825 yards and 16 touchdowns and also caught 34 passes for 360 yards. Defense? Just nine starters are back, including inside linebacker Marvin Jones, who is an early front-runner to win the Butkus Award. Add three consecutive great recruiting seasons, and there is every reason to believe the Seminoles will be every bit as good as their own expectations, which are very high indeed.

QUESTION MARKS: Where are the Seminoles going to self-destruct on their schedule? It happens every year. In 1988 they were a preseason No. 1 and lost their opener to Miami 31-0. Although they won 11 straight, the best they could do was climb to No. 3. In 1989 it was a 0-2 start followed by a 10-game winning streak. Last year it was October losses to Miami and Auburn.

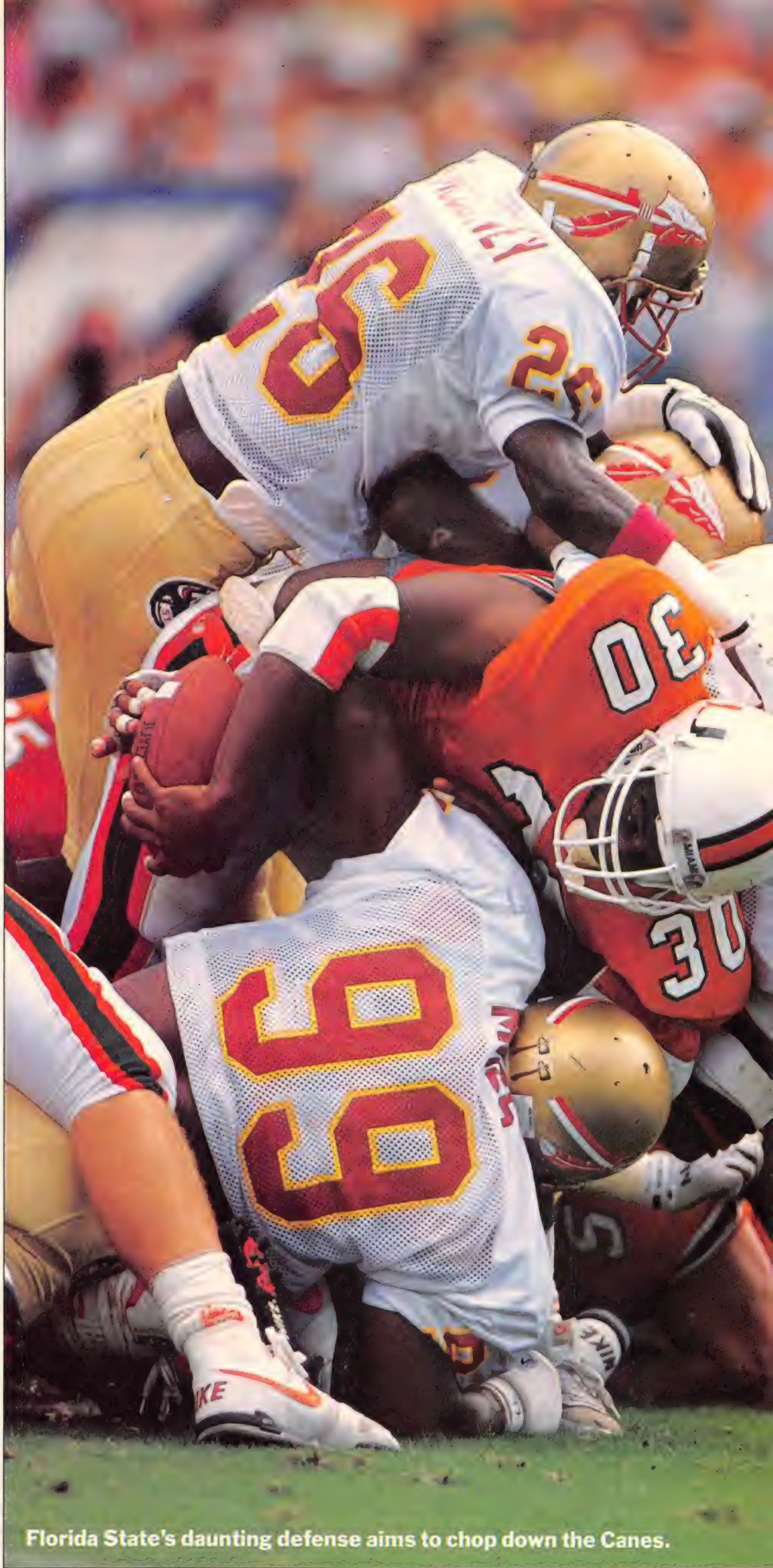
SCHEDULE: Ridiculous as usual. From the opening game against Brigham Young in the Pigskin Classic to the closer at Florida, the Seminoles have few soft spots. "There's no room for a lull," says coach Bobby Bowden. The key, however, could be a September 28 date at Michigan.

BEST SCENARIO: For once, the Seminoles don't stub their toe and go unbeaten as the talent assembled by Bowden finally puts together a complete season.

WORST SCENARIO: They lose the opener to BYU, lose at Michigan, and it's "wait until next year." —MARK BLAUDSCHUN

MICHIGAN

2 STRENGTHS: Laughter sure to make the rounds at a Big Ten stadium near you: What could possibly stop a loaded offense that has a strong-armed quarterback, two pairs of fleet feet at wide receiver, a star in the making at tailback, and an offensive line that resembles Mount Rushmore? Bo Schembechler's return to the sidelines at Michigan Stadium, of course. All kidding aside, Elvis Grbac ranks fourth in career completions and touchdowns, categories that figure to improve substantially as long as Derrick Alexander and Desmond Howard are around to leave defenders with severe wind burn. Sophomore sensation Ricky Powers closed out the season with four straight 100-yard performances behind



Florida State's daunting defense aims to chop down the Canes.



All-Earth tackle Greg Skrepenak, center Steve Everitt, and guards Joe Cocozzo and Matt Elliott. Not that coach Gary Moeller will have to ask for volunteers on defense: Inside linebacker Erick Anderson is the ringleader of a talented group that lacks only experience in the backfield.

QUESTION MARKS: Three defeats of a year ago were by a combined total of six points, in large part the result of a make-one, miss-one kicking game. If the Wolverines are to thrive in close quarters, kicker J.D. Carlson must improve upon his 8-for-16 accuracy on field goals from outside 29 yards. Although cornerback Lance Dottin is the lone returnee to the secondary, a spate of late-season injuries allowed Otis Williams and Corwin Brown to take a crash course at safety.

SCHEDULE: This is where any title aspirations in Ann Arbor run headlong into reality. After a opening tune-up at Boston College, the Wolverines will face a Murderers' Row in successive weeks: Notre Dame and Florida State at home, and Iowa and Michigan

State, and Iowa—all of which are armed and dangerous this season—expose the Wolverines' fuzzy-cheeked secondary before it comes of age. —PAUL LADEWSKI

WASHINGTON

3 STRENGTHS: The best defense in the West. Don James' antidote for today's multiple offense is a high-speed multiple defense featuring an All-America caliber down lineman (junior Steve Emtman), speedy all-purpose linebackers, and cornerbacks that hit like outside backers. Washington fields only two "true" down linemen and three defensive backs in its starting 11; the rest are hybrid linebacker types who have either the run support skills to pass as outside linemen or the speed to play defensive back. Thus, Washington can show an eight-man front or a six-deep secondary without substitution—and without getting burned. Washington held six teams to less than 50 yards rushing last year *and* ranked as the league's No. 1 unit against the pass. Linebacker is the key position in this altered

'91 COLLEGE PREVIEW

SEMINOLE UPRISING

With returning star material at quarterback and running back, and a hustling, hungry defense, Florida State coach Bobby Bowden has his tribe ready to go on the warpath

State on the road. Season-closing dates at Illinois and at home vs. Ohio State round out a nail-scratching slate.

BEST SCENARIO: Motivated by the memory of recent near-misses, a senior-laden offensive unit takes no prisoners.

WORST SCENARIO: Notre Dame, Florida

3-4 look, and James has his top six back in '91.

QUESTION MARKS: James was counting on junior quarterback Mark Brunell to ease Washington through some rough times while it was breaking in a new tailback and replacing three major blockers in the run-

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

ning game. However, Brunell is out for the season with an anterior cruciate tear in his knee, and James has one more worry on offense. Brunell's replacement, sophomore Billy Joe Hobert, is a gifted athlete—a home-grown high school All-American who has a linebacker's ruggedness and Brunell's mobility—and the players love him. There's only one problem: He's thrown just six passes in his college career.

SCHEDULE: Washington plays two dangerous games right off the bat: September 7 at Stanford and, after an off week, September 21 at Nebraska. The Huskies' reward is five home games during the next six weeks, including nonconference pushovers Toledo and Kansas State. In a huge break, Washington avoids UCLA, the team that knocked the Huskies out of the national championship picture last season. The real test comes November 2 at Southern Cal.

BEST SCENARIO: The talented but untested Hobert gives Washington a 10-1 season and its second straight Pac-10 championship. Despite losing two All-Pac-10 players in the offensive line, Washington's running game blossoms behind tackles Siupeli Malamala and Lincoln Kennedy and center Ed Cunningham—each of whom earned all-conference attention in '90. The defense alone overpowers most opponents early on, giving Hobert and Co. eight games to prepare for the big road game against USC.

WORST SCENARIO: Hobert's inexperience only heightens the pressure on Washington's running game. Junior Beno Bryant, Greg Lewis' replacement at tailback, gives the Huskies more breakaway speed, but at 5'11", 175, he doesn't have Lewis' durability. Nebraska catches Washington off-guard early, and USC capitalizes on the home-field advantage, but the Huskies finish 8-3 and go to a bowl anyway. —BRAD BUCHHOLZ

GEORGIA TECH

4 STRENGTHS: Almost all of the skilled position players that helped Tech win a share of the national title a year ago are back, including 15 starters (seven on offense, eight on defense). Among them are quarterback Shawn Jones, leading rusher William Bell, and the three top receivers—split end Emmett Merchant, flanker Bobby Rodriguez, and flanker Greg Lester. On defense, the Yellow Jackets also are strong and experienced, with defensive back Ken Swilling (switched from free to strong safety) and outside linebacker Marco Coleman (13 sacks) listed as preseason All-Americans.



Recent near-misses should motivate Grbac and the veteran Wolverines.

QUESTION MARKS: Can an offensive line be rebuilt after losing five key performers? Will Tech, which surprised a lot of teams last year, be able to do that this year?

SCHEDULE: After opening against Penn State in the Kickoff Classic, it's not overly demanding. The Jackets' last three games are at home. Their toughest stretch could be a two-game road swing at Clemson and North Carolina State the last week in September and the first week in October.

BEST SCENARIO: Tech picks up where it finished last season and goes into November unbeaten. If that happens, the Jackets could again be contending for a national championship.

WORST SCENARIO: Shawn Jones goes into a midseason slump, and the Jackets lose road games to North Carolina State and Clemson, falling out of not only the national championship race, but the ACC race as well. —M.B.

FLORIDA

5 STRENGTHS: Is there a more appropriately named place for offensive guru Steve Spurrier to operate than Gainesville? The "fun-and-gun" offense established 14 school records in Spurrier's debut as head man, and with four starters up front and the entire running back corps back for more, it could be "fun, sun, run, and run." Add Shane Matthews, the Southeast Conference's player of the year, as Spurrier's latest pet project at quarterback, and the Gators have the makings for Points-

ville. The thought of Spurrier's offensive prowess coupled with Florida's tradition of defense and one of the nation's top recruiting classes should unnerve Southeast Conference rivals. Tackle Brad Culpepper, inside linebacker Tim Paulk, and free safety Will White rank among the best at their positions in the nation.

QUESTION MARKS: It was tougher to run through quicksand with ankle weights than through the Gators defense—an 85.5-yard average yield on the ground was lowest in school history—but bookends Mark Murray and Huey Richardson have played out their final chapters. Tight end Kirk Kirkpatrick and wideouts Ernie Mills and Terence Barber left behind 131 receptions, 1,971 yards, and 19 touchdowns from last season, but as Spurrier says, "There is a lot of potential still there." Start with Tre Everett, a 5'9" jitterbug of a junior who led the team in receptions before a cracked rib in Week 3 reduced his effectiveness.

SCHEDULE: Mostly sunny, as Florida will play only three games outside the state boundary. If they can get past Tennessee at home and Auburn on the road—and those are two big ifs—then all that will stand between the Gators and a No. 1 ranking is a recent score (Seminoles 45, Gators 30) to settle with visiting Florida State on the final weekend of the regular season.

BEST SCENARIO: The Gators stay free of an injury epidemic that would expose their marginal depth at several positions.

WORST SCENARIO: In a Spurrier of the



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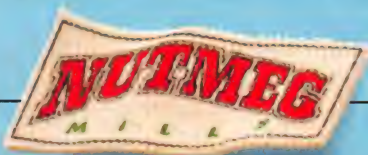


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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

moment decision, the defense-conscious SEC outlaws the forward pass. —P.L.

OKLAHOMA

6 STRENGTHS: With a new, inventive offense and a high-speed defense, Gary Gibbs' Sooners emerged as one of the most daring teams in the country last year—and the Sooners should be even better in '91. Oklahoma is loaded at the skill positions: Sophomore quarterback Gale Gundy should single-handedly lead the Sooners into the passing era, outside linebacker Joe Bowden has an All-America blend of pursuit and power, and the fullback tandem of Kenyon Rasheed and Mike McKinley is more entertaining than most tailbacks and more overpowering than most light trucks. If tailback Mike Gaddis makes a successful comeback after missing the entire 1990 season, watch out.

QUESTION MARKS: Oklahoma is jittery about its depth on the offensive line (three starters lost, plus tight end Adrian Cooper) and on its defensive front five (three starters lost). OU's new defensive coordinator, former Texas A&M assistant Tom Hayes, realizes that the Sooners' effectiveness against the run will determine whether his team is a contender or a champion.

SCHEDULE: Oklahoma has its most inviting schedule since 1987: seven home games, not counting an eighth played on a neutral field against Texas. In other nonconference games North Texas, Utah State, and Virginia Tech replace UCLA, Pittsburgh, and Tulsa. The Sooners get Colorado and Oklahoma State at home, but more importantly, they drew an off week before the season finale with Nebraska in Lincoln.

BEST SCENARIO: Far more confident and experienced than last year's 8-3 team, Oklahoma races through the first half of the season and avenges last year's one-point loss to Texas. Colorado catches OU too early in a rebuilding season to pull off an upset; besides, the Sooners are just too fast on the corners. Oklahoma's speed and versatility offset Nebraska's power in the Big Game, sending OU to the bowls with an undefeated record.

WORST SCENARIO: Oklahoma's magnificent defensive performance against Nebraska last season turns out to be an aberration. Hayes has to tone down his desire to frequently blitz, saving his linebackers for run support. Running straight at the Sooners, Texas beats OU for the third straight year, and Nebraska's line proves to be too strong. —B.B.

MIAMI

7 STRENGTHS: On the surface, only the kicking game looks strong, with Carlos Huerta returning for a senior season in which he hopes to increase his NCAA record of 141 consecutive PATs, as well as the nine other UM kicking records he holds. However, there is talent at Miami—it's just inexperienced. "We will have a

There's no Notre Dame this year, but high-scoring Houston is on the slate.

BEST SCENARIO: All the inexperienced players develop, either Torretta or Fortay emerges as the quarterback, and the Canes continue their pursuit of excellence.

WORST SCENARIO: No one emerges as quarterback, and the inexperienced Canes never develop. They lose early and often and drop out of sight before October. —M.B.



The Hurricanes hope McGuire can carry the load for a young squad.

very, young, inexperienced team," says Miami coach Dennis Erickson, "but that doesn't mean we're not going to be good." Some of the veterans returning are wide receiver Lamar Thomas, who averaged 17.3 yards per catch as a sophomore last season, and junior fullback Stephen McGuire (21 touchdowns in two seasons). On defense, veteran linebacker Darrin Smith and free safety Darryl Williams will be the anchors of a relatively green unit.

QUESTION MARKS: Who will replace Craig Erickson at quarterback? Will it be Gino Torretta or Brian Fortay, or someone else? Can the Hurricanes rebuild after losing last year's starting quarterback, two top receivers, two top tight ends, three starting offensive linemen, two All-America defensive players, and both starting cornerbacks?

SCHEDULE: Typical Miami, with an inter-sectional mixture of good and average teams. A key game looks like an intrastate game with Florida State in Tallahassee in November.

CLEMSON

8 STRENGTHS: Ground control will be the theme in Death Valley this fall. Few teams will be able to run the ball better than the Tigers, who averaged 246.3 yards a game rushing last season. Ronald Williams, last year's ACC rookie of the year, gained 941 yards as a freshman while scoring eight touchdowns. Junior fullback Rudy Harris averaged 4.4 yards a carry. Add the depth of an entire stable of running backs who fought all season for playing time, and it's not hard to see why coach Ken Hatfield feels the offense will run as smoothly as it did a year ago.

QUESTION MARKS: Can a defense that led the nation a year ago rebuild in one season? The Tigers have only five starters back and spent the spring looking for replacements on a unit that ranked sixth in passing defense, second in scoring and rushing defense, and first overall. If it can find them,

Clemson is going to be very difficult to beat and could climb quickly in the polls.

SCHEDULE: Built to gain a top 10 finish: Opens with Appalachian State. Closes with Duke in Tokyo. A key home game against Georgia Tech on September 28. Two open dates. In other words, no heavy lifting.

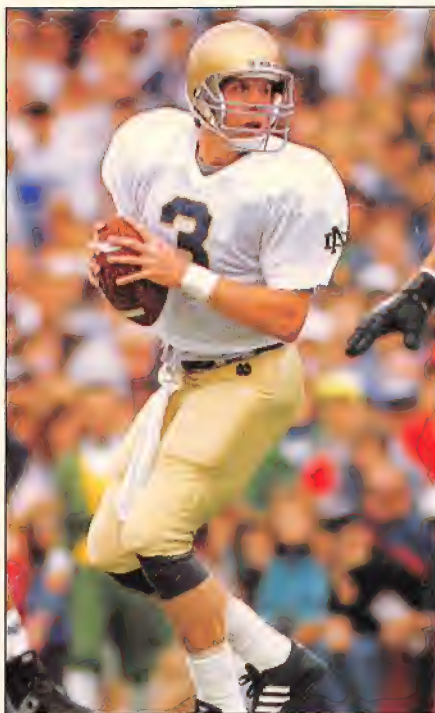
BEST SCENARIO: The five-game winning streak of last season continues for 11 more games this year as the Tigers grind people up with their running game.

WORST SCENARIO: Williams gets hurt, the ground game sputters, and Clemson disappears early from the title race. —M.B.

NOTRE DAME

9 STRENGTHS: Seven offensive starters and five defensive starters would be a nice nucleus on most teams. However, this is Notre Dame, which lost Rocket Ismail, Todd Lyght, and Chris Zorich, but also creates stars just by having them play at Notre Dame. "I feel sorry for anyone who feels sorry for Notre Dame," says Ismail, who skipped his last year at Notre Dame for the riches of the Canadian Football League. Sorry indeed. Not with quarterback Rick Mirer, tight end Derek Brown (a three-year starter), and tailback Rodney Culver (13 career touchdowns, 1,147 yards) returning. Not with free safety Greg Davis and inside

linebacker Demetrius DuBose coming back on defense. Not with another blue-chip recruiting class.



Sure, Mirer will miss The Rocket, but the Irish aren't quite green.

QUESTION MARKS: How are you going to replace Ismail and all those studs on defense? Well, freshman recruit Mike Miller reportedly is faster than The Rocket and ready to take over. And Holtz says that while there might be unknowns on defense, there isn't a shortage of talent, just experience.

SCHEDULE: Same old, same old. Seven bowl teams—Indiana, Michigan, Michigan State, Air Force, USC, Tennessee, and Penn State—are on the schedule; five of those teams were in the top 20 in the final Associated Press poll of 1990. The Irish's biggest challenges—Michigan and Penn State—are also on the road.

BEST SCENARIO: The Irish beat Michigan in Ann Arbor on September 14, which gives a young, inexperienced team the confidence necessary to rip through the rest of the regular season unbeaten.

WORST SCENARIO: Mirer struggles all season, no one emerges on offense to carry the burden, and coach Lou Holtz's pessimism becomes prophetic. —M.B.

NEBRASKA

10 STRENGTHS: After leading the NCAA in rushing offense for six of the last 11 years, Nebraska may surprise the Big Eight with some passing this year. Following the lead of

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Small Company's New Golf Ball Flies Too Far; Could Obsolete Many Golf Courses

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By Mike Henson

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FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Colorado and Oklahoma, coach Tom Osborne placed much more emphasis on his passing attack this spring. Why? Nebraska has four dangerous receivers in senior split ends Jon Bostick and Tyrone Hughes, sophomore tight end Johnny Mitchell, and senior wingback Nate Turner. There's also a big second factor: Senior Mickey Joseph, a prototype option quarterback still recovering from a severe leg laceration suffered in last year's Oklahoma game, may not be able to hold his job. Walk-on Tom Hasse, a fine passer who replaced Joseph early in the Citrus Bowl, shocked everyone in April; he completed 10 of 16 passes for 162 yards and rushed for 63 yards in 14 carries in the final spring scrimmage.

QUESTION MARKS: The Huskers lost six defensive players in the NFL draft, but remember: Nebraska's depth is awesome. The only real trouble spot appears to be the secondary. In a more recent development, tailback Leodis Flowers—Nebraska's most effective runner for two years and the nation's 15th-leading rusher in 1990—has walked off the team.

SCHEDULE: Nebraska has run up a streak of 17 nonconference home victories in a row, a string that probably will stand at 19 (Utah State, Colorado State) when national power Washington comes to town on September 21. Arizona State, a potential top 25 team, faces the Huskers the following week in Tempe. In terms of the Big Eight: The Huskers take on Oklahoma State and Colorado on the road and Oklahoma at home in the season finale.

BEST SCENARIO: Osborne's commitment to improving his passing game gives Nebraska some much-needed diversity on offense—the same kind of diversity that paid big dividends for Colorado last year. Travis Hill, an unsung hero in 1990, emerges as a better outside linebacker than former teammate Mike Croel. Sophomore tailback Derek Brown (who might have beaten out Flowers anyway) and redshirt freshman Calvin Jones run wild behind Nebraska's superb line. Home-field advantage vs. Washington and Oklahoma puts the Huskers over the top in their two toughest games.

WORST SCENARIO: Joseph makes a stirring comeback, but Osborne holds back his passing game because of Joseph's 43% passing last year. The Huskers destroy teams on the ground and mop up against the Iowa States and Utah States, but Washington, Oklahoma, and Arizona State throw their entire defenses at Nebraska's run and come away with victories. —B.B.

PENN STATE

11 STRENGTHS: Eight veteran defensive starters, including four linebackers at Linebacker U, and the return of quarterback Tony Sacca, who is coming off his best season, are the reasons smiles were seen for most of the spring in State College, Pa. Add a blue-chip recruiting class—although coach Joe Paterno doesn't even acknowledge the existence of freshmen in the media guide—and it is easy to see why the Nittany Lions are ready to roar again. Sacca, who passed for 1,866 yards last season, clearly has established himself as the leader of the team. Defensively, big-play back Darren Perry (eight interceptions last season) is the best player on a unit that will be difficult to score against.

QUESTION MARKS: Who's going to run the ball? Last year's two leading rushers, Leroy



There are no doubts about Gardere's legs, but can his so-so arm hurt defenses deep?

Thompson and Gary Brown, are gone, and there are no obvious candidates to step into the void. Who's going to catch the ball? Leading receiver Dave Daniels is gone. Who's going to block? Four of the five starting offensive linemen are gone.

SCHEDULE: The Big Ten will look like a piece of cake after another normal year of mayhem as an independent: USC on the road.

Brigham Young and Georgia Tech. Miami. Notre Dame. Pitt. Oh, my.

BEST SCENARIO: Sacca has his best season, the offensive line jells, and either Sam Gash or Gerry Collins emerges as the leading runner as the Nittany Lions roar through their schedule without a hitch, going into a November 16 match at Beaver Stadium with Notre Dame unbeaten.

WORST SCENARIO: The offense never develops, and the Lions lose a game a month for four months and are shut out of a major New Year's Day bowl once again. —M.B.

TEXAS

12 STRENGTHS: Offensive co-ordinator Lynn Amedee and defensive coordinator Leon Fuller, the two men most responsible for saving the job of beleaguered coach David McWilliams last season and putting Texas into the Cotton

Bowl for the first time since 1984. Fuller, a renowned defensive coordinator under Fred Akers from 1977 to 1981, returned to Texas in 1989 after seven miserable years at Colorado State and made an immediate impact. In just two years Fuller has restored the familiar swagger to Texas' man defense, bolstered the pass rush, and returned the secondary to its old glory. Amedee, who also came to Austin in '89, rescued Texas from a 10-year offensive funk with his balanced multiple look.

QUESTION MARKS: Texas doesn't have any major worries, only some nagging doubts at quarterback. Will Texas overcome gritty junior Peter Gardere's inability to hurt a defense deep downfield, or will Amedee turn to his gifted left-handed redshirt freshman, Steve Clements? Gardere's minor knee injury in spring drills opened the door, but Clements doesn't appear ready to step in—yet. Texas loses its top three wide receivers and three more starters on the offensive line, but the Longhorns are loaded with young talent.

SCHEDULE: No Penn State or Colorado this year; instead, Texas gets Auburn and the Jackie Sherrill Reunion Bowl at Mississippi State. Still, an improved Oklahoma team will give Texas trouble on October 12 in Dallas. The biggest hurdle: Four big games in 20 days from November 9 to November 28, including top 20 hopefuls Houston, Baylor, and Texas A&M.

BEST SCENARIO: Sophomore running back

Butch Hadnot, Texas' best running back since Earl Campbell, becomes only the third Texas player in the last 14 years to rush for 1,000 yards in a season—a situation that allows Gardere to take his time breaking in a new fleet of wide receivers. Though not as

Davis, and linebacker John Derby headline a defense that figures to take fewer vacations against the big boys than it did a year ago when Miami, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio State, and Washington averaged 34.4 points a game.



Auburn's new-fangled air attack will be tripped up short of an SEC crown.

spectacular on defense without 1990 big-play leaders Brian Jones and Stanley Richard, Texas plays even better as a unit with rising star Boone Powell and a terrific front four. As in 1990, Texas goes into New Year's Day ranked in the top five in the nation.

WORST SCENARIO: After a cheery 6-1 start, Texas runs into trouble in Killer November. Houston, a team that has scored an average of 49 points per game against Texas over the last four years, pulls off a minor upset at the Astrodome. Overplaying Texas' control passing strategy, defenses begin to frustrate the Longhorns by blitzing Gardere and daring him to beat them long. The challenge of facing the league's two strongest power teams in the final week of the season proves too much: Texas winds up 7-4 and heads for the Sun Bowl. —B.B.

IOWA

13 STRENGTHS: Anchored by senior tackle Rob Baxley, the backbone of the offense is a gargantuan line that could pass for a human landslide. The return of four starters up front is particularly good news for Matt Rodgers, the nimble-footed, radar-armed quarterback who should get plenty of time to pick and choose among all-purpose tailback Mike Saunders, sticky-fingered wideouts Danan Hughes and Jon Filloon, and tight end Alan Cross. End Leroy Smith, nose tackle Rod

QUESTION MARKS: At this time a year ago, Iowa came off its first nonbowl season since 1980 and lacked sufficient star attractions to be taken seriously by most pigskin prognosticators. Now that the word is out about their numbers and experience, however, the Hawkeyes are no longer primed for an ambush. As coach Hayden Fry is quick to point out, "We won't have the advantage of being a surprise team that we were a year ago." The departures of six first team all-conference selections, most notably Big Ten MVP Nick Bell and defensive tackles Jim Johnson and Matt Ruhland, will be the ultimate test of the Hawkeyes' depth. Can Saunders and tailback Marvin (Scooter) Lampkin fill the 1,009-yard void left by Bell's departure? Can Ron Geater and Jeff Nelson take up the slack in the defensive line?

SCHEDULE: The nonconference menu—Hawaii and Northern Illinois at home, Iowa State on the road—is strictly pound cake and strawberries. Better yet, the Hawkeyes will meet perennial Big Ten contenders Michigan and Illinois in their own backyard and Michigan State not at all.

BEST SCENARIO: The soft early schedule has a settling effect before the Hawkeyes dig into the meat of the Big Ten lineup.

WORST SCENARIO: The absence of Bell and Tony Stewart, who accounted for 69% of a single-season rushing record, turns the offense into an easy read. —P.L.

AUBURN

14 STRENGTHS: What's this—the university that gave us Bo Jackson, Brent Fullwood, et al., in the shotgun formation? Given the departures of tailback Stacy Danley and fullback James Joseph and the uneven state of the offensive line, expect Running Back U to throw caution to the wind. Quarterback Stan White (2,242 yards, 14 touchdowns, 14 interceptions) made rapid strides as a freshman, and he doesn't want for targets in wideouts Herbert Casey and Dale Overton and tight ends Victory Hall and Fred Baxter. Massive tackle Walter Tate, outside pass-rusher Jon Wilson, and cornerback Corey Barlow anchor a defense that is formidable but not deep by traditional Auburn standards.

QUESTION MARKS: To hear coach Pat Dye tell it, the main concern is not the loss of 11 starters, including the one-two punch of Danley and Joseph and defensive tackle David Rocker. What Dye has preached is a return to what he calls the "Auburn Way," an attitude he felt had left the ranks a year ago when the Tigers lacked senior leadership and a full-fledged

work ethic. Kicks just keep gettin' harder to find, particularly on fourth-and-long. The Tigers had no fewer than four punts blocked, a breakdown that Dye calls "the biggest we had last season." Indeed, Dye would like to see the pigskin where the punter and snapper jobs were at the outset of spring drills: up in the air.

SCHEDULE: It won't take long to determine whether the Tigers have taken the "Auburn Way" or the highway. In a grueling three-week stretch in September they will host pesky Mississippi before they travel to highly regarded Texas and Southeast Conference powerhouse Tennessee.

BEST SCENARIO: The move back to a 4-3 alignment restores the roar and the once-dominant pass rush.

WORST SCENARIO: A patchwork offensive line turns Dye into a prophet when he says, "It doesn't have what we would call a strength position." —P.L.

TEXAS A&M

15 STRENGTHS: Senior Bucky Richardson, a land cruiser of a quarterback in a conference of Ferraris, will allow Texas A&M to do what it does best: run the ball, control the clock, and set up its aggressive defense. A&M's emotional leader since his freshman season of 1987, Richardson averaged a terrific 6.9 yards per carry last season and even showed

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

some passing flair in a 9 of 11, 203-yard performance against Brigham Young in the Holiday Bowl. Although Texas A&M loses the nation's best tailback-fullback combo in Darren Lewis and Robert Wilson, budding star Greg Hill—a redshirt freshman—

threat, but A&M catches a rebuilding Tigers team at the perfect time and place: opening day, at College Station. The Aggies get rival Texas and explosive Houston at home but face Baylor and Texas Tech on the road.

BEST SCENARIO: Hot recruit Sam Adams progresses faster than expected at defensive end and Henry returns to the lineup, which relieves Slocum's doubts about the defensive line. Bolstered by UCLA transfer



He's no big name, but Richardson can make a big dent in a defense.

should emerge as one of the nation's bright young runners.

QUESTION MARKS: For the first time since the early Jackie Sherrill years, Texas A&M looks vulnerable in the lines. There's a grand total of one year's full-time starting experience in the 1991 Aggies offensive line, but coach R.C. Slocum has a couple of terrific second-year players—redshirt freshman tackle Todd Mathison and guard John Richard—who could save the day. Slocum is more concerned, however, about his defensive front's ability to stop the run. With last year's top six defensive linemen either gone or coming off injury, A&M's season may hinge on the recovery of nose guard Pat Henry, who suffered a serious elbow injury in 1989 and hasn't played a down since.

SCHEDULE: The Aggies' nonconference schedule is a breeze. LSU poses the only

Patrick Bates at free safety, Texas A&M fields the best secondary in the conference to complement the traditionally powerful cast of linebackers. Despite an early loss to Tech or Baylor, the Aggies beat Texas at home in their season finale and go into the Cotton Bowl with a 10-1 record.

WORST SCENARIO: With only two starters returning on offense, the Aggies are not sharp early; they lose to gritty Baylor and are upset by Texas Tech, a team that somehow always manages to give A&M fits. Without quarterback Lance Pavlas (for the first time in four years) to bail out the team in obvious passing situations, the Aggies do not develop into a good come-from-behind team. Baylor's Robert Strait, Rice's Trevor Cobb, and Texas' Butch Hadnot exploit A&M's vulnerability to the run. The Aggies jell late, but a killer October leaves them 6-5. —B.B.

TENNESSEE

16 STRENGTHS: Perhaps no school boasts dual game-breakers of the caliber of wideout Carl Pickens and free safety Dale Carter. The Southeast Conference's leading receiver a year ago, Pickens caught more passes (53) for more yards (917) than Raghieb (Rocket) Ismail. What's more, Pickens has someone to get him the ball in quarterback Andy Kelly, who only needs to curb his interception rate to become top-shelf. Not only did Carter loosen chin straps like few others at the position, but pretzel sales plunged every time he handled a kickoff (29.8 yards per return) or punt (13.1). The backbone of the team is a veteran defense that returns every player who started the last two games of the 1990 campaign. Free advice to opposing QBs: Learn the turtle position. The Vols are particularly deep in sack monsters with defensive ends Todd Kelly, Chris Mims, and Chuck Smith, and pest strips abound in a secondary that includes Carter and cornerback Jeremy Lincoln.

QUESTION MARKS: Suffice it to say, the Vols will go as far as their defense, Kelly, and Pickens take them. Pickens can expect double and triple coverage as soon as the team bus arrives, as a dearth of receivers and a rebuilt running game will leave coach Johnny Majors with few options and plenty of Maalox moments. The bad news: After Pickens, the second-through-ninth wideouts of a year ago either have left or been moved to tight end. The really bad news: A bare-bones offensive line anchored by center John Fisher will return only one other starter. The worst news: Among the returnees, only tailback Tavio Henson rushed for more than 100 yards last season.

SCHEDULE: Who's responsible for this, anyway? Bobby Bowden? As if back-to-back road tests against Florida and Alabama won't be difficult enough, the Vols have lined up nonconference scrapes with Louisville, UCLA, and Notre Dame. Anything more than a 5-3 record and a bowl invitation would be a Majors achievement.

BEST SCENARIO: The sudden emergence of a ground attack means less K.P. duty—as in Kelly-to-Pickens—and more ball control.

WORST SCENARIO: Kelly is buried under the avalanche of a nonstop pass rush. —P.L.

UCLA

17 STRENGTHS: Sophomore quarterback Tommy Maddox is Heisman Trophy material, as everyone in the Los Angeles area realized after UCLA's dramatic 45-42 loss to USC last year. Standing tall at 6'4", taking deep snaps from UCLA's shotgun, Maddox is a dominant presence who by season's end moved the

Bruins at will. The Bruins have never given him much help on the ground, but it doesn't matter—Maddox takes his hits and plays with a fearless air that scares opposing coaches. "He has great touch and a wonderful sense of what's going on around him," says USC's Larry Smith. "He can't miss."

QUESTION MARKS: For two years now, the Bruins have had trouble running the football—as well as stopping those who run against them. The Bruins ranked No. 8 in the conference in defense against the run last year, allowing their opponents to beat them with ball control. As usual, the Bruins are waiting for a tailback to emerge, either oft-injured junior Kevin Williams or senior Shawn Wills. UCLA finished seventh in the conference in rushing last year—and its top rusher, Brian Brown, has moved on.

SCHEDULE: Ty Detmer vs. Maddox at the Rose Bowl on September 7 is a must-see. UCLA figures to be an underdog the following week against a powerful Tennessee defense, and a game against San Diego State should provide a lot of fireworks. Defending champion Washington is not on UCLA's conference schedule this year; the Bruins face USC in their season finale after a home game against Oregon.

BEST SCENARIO: Surprise Heisman Trophy winner Maddox assumes such strong command of the offense that UCLA's poor-defense problems fade into insignificance. The Bruins' traditionally strong pass coverage, led by corner Dion Lambert, give them a big victory over BYU; Tennessee, however, is just too physical. Sophomore tackle Craig Novitsky, UCLA's most promising offensive lineman in years, gives the Bruins some punch up front, and Shawn Wills blossoms into a major receiving threat at running back. Taking advantage of their no-Washington schedule, the Bruins upset USC to go to the Rose Bowl.

WORST SCENARIO: Power teams continue to give UCLA trouble. The Bruins are embarrassed for the second year in a row by California in the season opener, and things go downhill from there. UCLA has kicking problems and is unable to find a replacement for Brad Daluiso. Maddox is magnificent, but the blossoming Bruins remain one year away.

—B.B.

BYU

18 STRENGTHS: Quarterback Ty Detmer returns from his Heisman-winning season of a year ago and will be asked to carry even more of the load. Detmer, who has already set 42 NCAA records and tied five others, is recovering from shoulder surgery after suffering two separations in the Cougars' Holiday Bowl loss to Texas A&M. Still, Detmer is only 426 yards away from setting

an all-time NCAA passing yardage mark. On defense, the Cougars have a veteran linebacker unit led by Rocky Biegel. Coach LaVell Edwards had an excellent recruiting class, which should fill a lot of holes. Punter/kicker Earl Kauffman is probably one of the best kickers in the country, but with Detmer running the offense last year he didn't do much except kick extra points.

QUESTION MARKS: Can an almost entirely new offensive line give Detmer the protection he needs?

SCHEDULE: An absolute killer. BYU opens with Florida State in the second annual Pigskin Classic, followed by road games against UCLA and Penn State. It's not inconceivable the Cougars could be 0-3 when they meet Air Force in their home opener on September 28.

BEST SCENARIO: Detmer opens the season against FSU like he did last year against Miami, when the Cougars stunned the top-ranked Hurricanes in their opener.

WORST SCENARIO: Florida State mauls Detmer because of an inexperienced offensive line, and the franchise reinjures his shoulder.

—M.B.

SYRACUSE

19 STRENGTHS: "Defense" is going to be the operative word in the Dome until the green offensive line gets some game experience. Nine starters return on defense. The best player may be defensive tackle George Rooks, if he can match his performance with his potential. This is the 6'4", 274-pound senior's last opportunity to prove he's the best defensive player ever to play at Syracuse. The offense will be exciting, mainly because the combination of quarterback Marvin Graves and wideout Shelby Hill returns for a second season. Graves set freshman records for touchdown passes (nine), passing yards (1,711), and total offense (1,866). Hill was the most prolific freshman receiver in Syracuse history with 33 receptions for 558 yards and five touchdowns.

QUESTION MARKS: How will the team adjust to first-year coach Paul Pasqualoni after the steady and successful reign of Dick MacPherson? Will the offensive line, with only one starter returning, be able to handle the burden of a killer schedule?

SCHEDULE: Hold tight. The good news is that the Orangemen don't face Miami this year. The bad news is that they must play Florida State and Florida, who both will be as good or better than the Hurricanes in 1991.

BEST SCENARIO: Graves and Co. play as well as sophomores as they did as freshmen, and the Orangemen are 5-0 on October 5 after stunning Florida State. From there, they finish out the season unbeaten and contend for No. 1.

WORST SCENARIO: The offensive line never develops.

—M.B.

BAYLOR

20 STRENGTHS: Over the last seven years, Baylor has dominated the Southwest Conference in the area of defense—and the Bears may field their finest yet in 1991. However, the big news in Waco is that the Bears have rediscovered offense. Frustrated by his team's huge turnover rate and ineffective running game, Grant Teaff junked his pro-style offense last season and returned to the offense that earned him fame, the I-formation veer. Sparked by two redshirt freshmen, fullback Robert Strait and quarterback J.J. Joe, Baylor jumped from sixth in the SWC in rushing offense to 15th in the nation. Without offense, the Bears were always dangerous; with offense, they're top 15 material.

QUESTION MARKS: Despite his obvious flair for running the option, Joe has a long way to go as a passer. In Strait the Bears have the most gifted runner in the SWC, yet Baylor's perilous depth situation at running back may leave him marooned at fullback. And then there's the issue of Teaff's conservative play-calling in big games. Facing a 20-20 tie against Texas A&M in College Station last year, Teaff decided to run out the clock in the final moments—a move that may have cost his team a bowl appearance.

SCHEDULE: Colorado (in Boulder) and Texas (in Austin) pose the biggest challenges. Baylor hasn't beaten Texas A&M since 1985, but the Bears get the Aggies in Waco this time. September nonconference home games against UTEP and Missouri look like automatic victories.

BEST SCENARIO: With most SWC defenses geared toward stopping spread-formation passing attacks, Baylor's old-fashioned option rolls up huge numbers. Teaff's speedy defense ranks No. 1 in the SWC for the fourth consecutive year, sparked by defensive end Robin Jones and All-America candidate Santana Dotson, a down lineman who plays with the flamboyance of Lawrence Taylor. With Baylor's most important game—Texas—saved for last, quarterback Joe has 10 weeks to develop as a passer before his big test.

WORST SCENARIO: The Bears' inability to pass early in the season gets them into hot water in a loss to Houston, a team that has beaten them badly (a combined 97-25) over the last two years. Teaff's decision to go for a one-point conversion in the final moments of 21-19 loss to Texas A&M sparks riots in Waco. The Bears' hesitancy to think of themselves as champions (they haven't been to the Cotton Bowl in 11 years) tugs them down in the big game against Texas.

—B.B.

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

GET OUT YOUR CALCULATORS. Footballs will be flying through the air and the airways this fall as Houston's Dave Klingler and Brigham Young's Ty Detmer unlimber their right arms in what promises to be a record-shattering Year of the Quarterback.

Detmer, the wisp of a senior who is continuing the tradition of illustrious BYU hurlers, is back to defend his Heisman Trophy and attempt to join Ohio State's Archie Griffin (in 1974 and '75) as the only players ever to win it twice. Klingler, a cool customer at the controls of John Jenkins' run-and-shoot attack, has the offensive weapons at his disposal to match Detmer pass for pass, yard for yard, and touchdown for touchdown.

No passing fancy, these two gunslingers are from the wild and wacky West, where the aerial circus is the biggest show, where defensive backs have nightmares about strong-armed, strong-willed throwers and devilish little receivers who dart all over the field, where scoreboards work overtime to keep track of the points and fans don't dare blink for fear of a missed touchdown. There's not much to choose from between these two headline grabbers, but Klingler gets the slight nod as the quarterback on INSIDE SPORTS' 1991 college football All-America team.

A year ago Detmer, the diminutive 6-foot, 175-pounder, led the way in the Heisman balloting to become the first player from the Western Athletic Conference to cop the coveted award. He set NCAA records for most passing yards in a season (5,188) and most touchdown passes in a career (86) and was the 10th underclassman, and the third in a row, to win the Heisman. The previous two junior winners, Houston's Andre Ware and Oklahoma State's Barry Sanders, skipped their senior seasons to join the National Football League.

Detmer is the latest in a string of brilliant quarterbacks to come out of pass-happy BYU, following Steve Young—the runner-up in the Heisman voting to Nebraska's Mike Rozier in 1983—and Marc Wilson, Jim McMahon, and Robbie Bosco, all of whom finished third in the voting. "It's about time," Detmer says, "that someone from Brigham Young won it." LaVell Edwards, the architect of BYU's high-powered attack, says, "Ty is as good at executing, reading, and knowing what to do as anybody I've ever seen."

No question Edwards would get a long

WE HAVE LIFTOFF

The Cougars' missile launcher, quarterback of Stanford to lead our 1991

By PHIL



Klingler runs and shoots with uncanny aim.

and loud argument from the folks in Houston, where Klingler rang up some staggering numbers while flawlessly executing Jenkins' X's and O's. Last year, his first as a starter after backing up Ware, Klingler broke or tied 33 NCAA game and season records, including touchdown passes (54), attempts (643), completions (374), and yards per game (467.3).

It takes several pages in Houston's press guide to list all of Klingler's achievements. For starters, he passed for 5,140 yards last season, including a mind-boggling 716 against Arizona State. And there were the controversial 11 touchdowns he threw in an 84-21 victory over undermanned Eastern Washington. Klingler was held to less than 300 yards passing in only one game, a 299-yard performance against Texas.

"There's not much more I can say about David Klingler that already hasn't been said," Jenkins says. "He's done everything you could possibly ask of a quarterback. And

you have to remember that he's going to get even better with more experience." That's a scary thought.

There is a flock of electrifying pass-catchers out there who would be any quarterback's dream. San Diego State's Patrick Rowe and Tennessee's Carl Pickens top the list. Rowe, who runs a 4.4 on a clear day, set school and WAC records last season with 1,392 yards on 71 catches and eight touchdowns. He takes an NCAA-record string of nine consecutive 100-yard receiving games into 1991.

"Obviously, Patrick has earned the right to start the year as a preseason All-American on everybody's list," says San Diego State coach Al Luginbill. "I can't imagine there's a better wide receiver in the country coming back."

At Tennessee Pickens no longer plays two positions, defensive back and wideout. After starting the final four games on defense as a freshman and intercepting a pass in each

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

OFFENSE

Pos.	Player	Year
QB	David Klingler	Sr.
RB	Glyn Milburn	Sr.
RB	Tico Duckett	Jr.
T	Bob Whitfield	Jr.
T	Greg Skrepenak	Sr.
G	Mike Gisler	Sr.
G	Leon Searcy	Sr.
C	Cal Dixon	Sr.
TE	Mark Chmura	Sr.
WR	Carl Pickens	Sr.
WR	Patrick Rowe	Sr.

DEFENSE

DT	Steve Emtman	Jr.
DT	Santana Dotson	Sr.
NG	Joel Steed	Sr.
OLB	Marco Coleman	Sr.
OLB	Levon Kirkland	Sr.
ILB	Robert Jones	Sr.
ILB	Erick Anderson	Sr.
CB	Troy Vincent	Sr.
CB	Terrell Buckley	Jr.
FS	Dale Carter	Sr.
SS	Ken Swilling	Sr.

IN HOUSTON

*David Klingler, teams with Glyn Milburn
collegiate All-America team*

AXELROD

ALL-AMERICA TEAM

Ht.	Wt.	School
6'2"	209	Houston
5'9"	171	Stanford
5'9"	188	Michigan St.
6'7"	300	Stanford
6'6"	325	Michigan
6'4"	305	Houston
6'3"	282	Miami
6'4"	277	Florida
6'5"	239	Boston College
6'1"	189	Tennessee
6'2"	192	San Diego St.
6'4"	283	Washington
6'4"	275	Baylor
6'2"	280	Colorado
6'3"	244	Georgia Tech
6'1"	232	Clemson
6'3"	235	East Carolina
6'1"	234	Michigan
6'0"	190	Wisconsin
5'10"	175	Florida St.
6'2"	182	Tennessee
6'2"	235	Georgia Tech



Milburn will burn you four different ways.

game, Pickens was a full-time, record-setting receiver a year ago with an SEC-high 917 yards on 53 catches, and his 13 receptions against Notre Dame were the most ever by a Vol in a game. "I've caught quite a few passes, and I'm not playing defense," Pickens says, smiling. "There's a lot to be grateful about."

Tennessee has had five receivers taken in the first round of the NFL draft in the past eight years. Pickens should make it six when his time comes.

The pro scouts are drooling over Boston College's Mark Chmura, a prototype tight end who has the strength and technique to block linebackers, the speed to go deep, and the size and fearlessness to be an inviting target over the middle.

Chmura has led the Eagles in receiving the past two years, stabbing 47 for 522 yards and two touchdowns as a junior. With 122 career catches, he is 18 shy of getting the school record.

The running back combo, on the smallish side, is made up of big-play speedburners. The next "Rocket" to burst on the college scene will be Stanford's Glyn Milburn, the nation's leader in all-purpose yards with 2,222. Milburn rang up 729 rushing yards and two touchdowns on 152 carries, 639 yards and two touchdowns on 64 receptions, 632 yards on 24 kickoff returns, and 367 yards on 24 punt returns. "In Glyn Milburn, we have the most versatile and explosive player in college football," says Stanford coach Dennis Green.

Michigan State's Tico Duckett, a jackrabbit runner whose 4.4 speed allowed him to elude defenders often enough to lead the Big Ten in rushing with 1,394 yards, is a player who jumps right at you when you look at him on film. A slasher from tailback in MSU's I-formation, Duckett hits the hole in a hurry and accelerates without breaking stride. The sixth-leading rusher in the country last season, Duckett averaged 5.4

yards a carry and scored 10 touchdowns. No wonder foes will be gearing defenses to stop him this season. "Everyone will be looking for him," says MSU coach George Perles, "but we won't try to hide him."

In front of every great running back is a no-neck, no-frills lineman who does his work in the trenches in anonymity. Although the positions they play are not considered glamorous, the offensive linemen are the heart and soul of any offense.

The All-America front wall of Stanford's Bob Whitfield, Michigan's Greg Skrepenak, Houston's Mike Gisler, Miami's Leon Searcy, and Florida's Cal Dixon is a tall and rangy bunch, averaging 6'5", 298 pounds. Whitfield, an expert break dancer and Nintendo fanatic, breaks out of the typical mold of the quiet, unassuming offensive lineman.

There's nothing quiet or unassuming about Tennessee's Dale Carter. This hitman in the defensive backfield terrorizes receivers who make the mistake of venturing into his territory. "You can intimidate a lot of players if you do it right," says Carter, who had five interceptions and was the nation's leading kickoff returner with an average of 29.8 per return.

"If somebody comes into my zone once or twice, I try to make sure he gets the message," says Carter.

Joining Carter in this dream secondary are Georgia Tech's Ken Swilling, Florida State's Terrell Buckley, and Wisconsin's Troy Vincent. Swilling, the leading contender for the Jim Thorpe Award that goes to the top defensive back in the country, is fully recovered from an ankle injury that forced him to miss two games last season. "We intend to move Swilling to strong safety to give us more flexibility in our secondary," says Tech coach Bobby Ross, "and to get Ken more involved in the defense."

The linebacking corps is an active and agile bunch: Clemson's Levon Kirkland, East Carolina's Robert Jones, Michigan's Erick Anderson, and Georgia Tech's Marco Coleman, the ACC leader a year ago with 13 quarterback sacks. Up front is a fearsome trio of Washington's Steve Emtman, Baylor's Santana Dotson, and Colorado's Joel Steed.

Emtman, down 20 pounds from last season when he became the first sophomore ever to win the Morris Trophy as the Pac-10's top defensive player, anchors a veteran crew of Huskies. Last year they led the nation in rushing defense, allowing 1.9 yards per carry and 66.8 per game. Emtman made 16 tackles for losses and brought down the quarterback 7½ times. ■

After scouring the roster of every major college team, PHIL AXELROD next will attempt to memorize the Manhattan phone book.

By ROBIN MILLER

WHEN THE GREEN FLAG waved last March at Surfers Paradise, Australia, to kick-start the 1991 Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) Indy Car season, Tom Sneva and Kevin Cogan were both "down under," but they weren't driving. Cogan was providing color commentary for ESPN, and Sneva was doing the same gig for Australian television. At the same time, back in the United States, Roberto Guerrero was playing tennis near his home in the Los Angeles area, and Pancho Carter was working around his house in Brownsburg, Ind. Raul Boesel was competing in an IMSA race, Teo Fabi was skiing in Italy, Johnny Parsons was racing a midget car in California, and Al Unser Sr. was riding a snowmobile at his ranch in Albuquerque.

These Indy Car veterans share a common denominator this season. They're walking instead of riding, spectating instead of performing, living in slow motion instead of on the edge. Why are some of the most

gifted open-wheel drivers in this country without jobs? It's not by choice. They're idling because of the financial realities of this business.

Big-time auto racing, CART style, has some new ground rules. More and more often, money talks and talent walks.

With the exception of a few teams, most drivers have to supply money rather than ability to secure a full-time CART ride. As the cost of Indy Car racing continues to escalate, the talent factor continues to be less important. Many car owners are more interested with a driver's sponsorship package than his racing résumé.

"I concentrated on working on my driving ability and not so much on my public relation and marketing [skills]," Carter says. "That's what a lot of the new guys have done different, and I guess that's why they're at where they're at. Some of these guys are good at marketing but don't have that desirable of a package. But they've got the sponsors, and that's frustrating."

To get a better picture of how this buy-a-ride system has affected CART, consider this unemployment line:

- Sneva, 43, won the 1983 Indianapolis 500, owns more 200-mph qualifying runs than anyone but Rick Mears, and is considered one of the finest oval-track drivers ever.

- Cogan, 35, easily could have won the 1986 Indy 500 (he finished second after a great run to the front) and ranks 15th in all-time Indy earnings with \$2.8 million.

- Guerrero, 32, never finished lower than fourth at Indy from 1984 through 1987 and is one of CART's most versatile performers.

- Carter, 40, one of USAC's toughest campaigners before becoming a consistent front-runner in CART, captured the '81 Michigan 500 and the pole at Indy in 1985.

- Boesel, 33, started every CART race in the past three years and finished eighth in 1988 point standings. He placed third at Indy in '89.

- Fabi, 36, brought Porsche to prominence in 1989 with a first and two seconds and ranked No. 4 at season's end. He won the pole at Indy as a rookie in 1983.

- Parsons, 46, another oval-track stand-out since the mid-'70s at Indy, has demon-

NO TICKET TO

Pancho Carter and other veterans of Indy Car racing are finding out that cars go to guys who can sell themselves to sponsors



strated that he can find speed quickly in equipment that's less than top-shelf.

• Unser, 52, is tied with A.J. Foyt as the only four-time Indy winners and ranks third in all-time Indy Car victories (39) and laps led in competition (5,797) and sixth in all-time earnings with \$6,129,941.

Basically, these proven racers have been bought out of their jobs. The days of a race driver showing up at a track with only his helmet in hand looking for a car to drive are over. Nowadays, he'd best be carrying a checkbook.

"It's frustrating," Sneva admits, "because the ability of the driver isn't the No. 1 criteria anymore."

"I feel helpless, frustrated," says Cogan. "Events outside my racing abilities are controlling my career."

"This is the first time in my life I've ever been without a ride," says Guerrero. "It's nerve-racking, and it's going to get worse. It really hit me when I watched that first CART race from Australia on TV."

"When the season is underway, it's tough," says Carter. "Right now I'm behind the 8-ball."

"I've always been hired to drive," says Boesel. "I never had to bring any money along, and it's difficult to accept."

There are several reasons talented drivers such as these guys don't have any wheels for the CART/PPG World Series: (1) There are only a handful of strong, solvent teams in CART, due to hard times in the past few years; (2) the prospects for new teams starting up are dim, because the dominant Chevrolet engine is only available to a "chosen few"; and (3) with the ridiculous costs of fielding an Indy Car team, owners have been forced to accept money rather than ability.

Cogan, who was hired last month to run only Indy, cites the Chevrolet situation as the major drawback in attracting new blood. "John Menard [Cogan's owner at Indy] and Consec [Cogan's sponsor at Indy] would have both run the whole CART season, instead of just one race, if they had a Chevrolet," he says. "Sponsors don't want to get

involved unless they have a chance to win, and that means having a Chevy."

CART also refuses to provide Buick with the necessary rules to make its engine competitive. Because the Buick is only potent at Indy (where USAC sanctions the race), several teams run only Indy instead of the entire CART season because they have no chance to be competitive. "It's crazy to try and run a Buick in CART races," says Cogan. "You don't have a chance."

Sneva, whose outspokenness about CART's future problems rankled some of his fellow drivers a few years back, has watched his predictions of doom come true. "It's a no-win situation for the owners," he says. "I don't see the sport having a chance to grow as long as the owners can't make it. Even if you've got the best sponsor and best team, it's still a negative cash flow situation."

"What's really frustrating is that NASCAR is just going up and up and doing some good things while Indy Car racing is standing still. I think CART finally has a CEO in [Bill] Stokkan who's trying to convince the owners that you have to be more concerned

RIDE



Sneva, Cogan, Guerrero, and Carter (clockwise from upper left): On today's CART circuit, money talks and talent walks.



Guerrero lost this Patrick ride to the higher-profile Sullivan.

with the paying customers than the high-tech side. It's satisfying to hear somebody say what I was [saying] five or six years ago, but I'm not sure CART will give him [Stokkan] the support to do anything significant. That's why the sport is stagnant."

Guerrero points to the lack of top-flight operations. "That is such a bad year because there are too many of us without rides right now," he says. "A lot of good cars have dropped out in CART." Other than Boesel, who has a full-time ride with Jaguar in the IMSA series, none of these veterans have anything going.

FABI'S PROMISING FUTURE with Porsche ended abruptly when the German car manufacturer pulled the plug at the end of 1990. When the machinists union dropped out after '89, Cogan was outside looking in. And Guerrero, who struggled through the growing pains of the new Alfa engine in 1989 and 1990, was suddenly handed his walking papers for 1991 by owner Pat Patrick.

"I was very disappointed with what happened," Guerrero says. "When I went with Alfa I looked at it as an investment, and I knew we'd have a couple of tough years starting out—which we did. So I worked like an idiot for two years, and now someone else [Danny Sullivan] is going to reap the benefits."

Guerrero is no stranger to adversity and seemingly insurmountable odds. In 1987 he was in an accident that resulted in severe head injuries and 17 days in a coma, but he bounced back. However, this latest setback has left him with unanswered questions.

"Who knows?" he says. "With big corporations and big teams, there's always a lot of politics. Everybody blames each other and points fingers, but nobody accepts the blame."

"Before my accident I was on top of the world, and it hasn't happened since. My first race back [after the accident] I proved nothing was wrong with me, but people forgot quickly."

Boesel stepped in for the injured Scott Pruett on the Truesports team in 1990 and did a commendable job with the underhorse-powered Judd engine. However, he knew he was out of a steady ride when Pruett healed. "I'm not blaming them [Truesports]," he says. "I was just in the right place at the wrong time."

Cogan ran quick with a middle-of-the-pack team in '89, yet only came up with two drives in 1990. "I keep showing people I have what it takes, but I can't get a good ride to prove it," he says. His bright future with Roger Penske ended almost as soon as it began in 1982. Cogan was blamed for the big crash as the '82 Indy 500 came down for the start, even though a broken CV joint caused him to lose control. "That devastated my career, no question," he says.

Carter was headed for NASCAR country when his sponsorship dissolved. "It's real disappointing because we thought we had a good ride down there, then the bottom fell out," he says. "I'm looking for whatever I can put together in either series, but the economy isn't helping things."

Even though Guerrero became an American citizen last year, the native Colombian has spent his entire career in either Formula One or Indy cars. He'd like to try NASCAR, but so far he's had no luck.

"The NASCAR series seems intriguing, and I talked with Kyle Petty a couple of times about running there," he says. "But I don't know anybody in NASCAR, and there aren't many foreigners down South, if you hadn't noticed."

Despite his incredible track record and ability to bring home winners, Unser has been a part-time driver since stepping in for the injured Mears and winning the CART/PPG title for Roger Penske in 1985. "I'm

still interested in driving, but I guess there's not that much interest in me," says Big Al.

SO NOW WHAT HAPPENS? DOES A driver who's run up front and won races settle for lesser equipment just to be part of the show?

"I didn't feel bad when I wasn't there [when the Indy Car season began] because when you've had a good situation you don't want to come back and get in equipment that can't be competitive," says Boesel. Guerrero agrees. "I told myself it would probably be very easy to do that," he says, "but I really don't want to drive unless it's worth the effort. I'm going to be very selective because I don't just want to be out there."

"It makes you look stupid, and it's the worst thing you can do for your career, to run at the back of the field."

Carter agrees. "You have to have good equipment or otherwise you're basically looking at just being out there strictly to be out there, and that's not for me," he says.

And Cogan promised himself after last year that he wasn't going to drive "unless I had a chance to be competitive."

Count Unser in, too. "I'm picky because there's no sense in running unless you've got a good shot at winning," he says. "And there aren't that many teams with those capabilities."

Sneva, the first man to travel 200 mph at Indy back in 1977, says you can rationalize your equipment. "You start thinking you can make up the difference—and before, you could," he says. "But we all know Superman died a long time ago. You can't carry the thing around on your back anymore."

To a man, none of these guys wants to think about watching in 1991.

"I'm getting better at golf and tennis, but I've been driving race cars since I was 14 and I'm not ready to quit," says Guerrero. "I'm still hoping to get a break, and I'll keep working at it."

Cogan can't stand much more frustration and foresees the end sooner than he planned. "I can see it coming," he says. "It's probably not that far off. I still want to do it [drive], but for my own sanity, I don't know how much longer I can rationalize why I don't have a ride."

Sneva has had only 10 starts the past three years, but he admits he's not sure he's prepared to be a spectator. "It's tough because I enjoy the sport so much. It's in the blood, you know. I don't think we're over the hill, and I'd really hate to think that I couldn't be part of it."

Talk about having the sport coursing in your veins: Veteran auto racing writer ROBIN MILLER can't get a blood donor card because he checks out as "too high-test."

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NUMBERS

QUICK-STRIKE ARTISTS

The best measure of how dangerous a pass receiver is isn't his average yards per game or per catch: It's the percentage of receptions he converts into touchdowns. Listed below are the NFL's most dangerous receivers (minimum of 200 receptions).

Rank	Player	Rec.	TDs	TD Pct.
1.	Alyn Beals	211	49	23.22
2.	Hugh Taylor	272	58	21.32
3.	Gary Collins	331	70	21.15
4.	Don Huston	488	100	20.49
5.	Billy Cannon	236	47	19.92
6.	Paul Warfield	427	85	19.91
7.	Bob Hayes	371	71	19.14
8.	Jim Mutscheller	220	40	18.18
9.	Sonny Randle	365	65	17.81
10.	Ray Renfro	281	50	17.79

By Greg Thomas

FIRST AMONG EQUALS

Postseason divisional battles in the National Football League mirror the NFL's professed desire for parity—with one glaring exception: The teams of the National Football Conference's East Division own their NFC Central counterparts in the playoffs. Since the merger of the NFL and the American Football League in 1970, the NFC East has gone 17-9 against the otherwise respectable NFC Central. Listed below are interdivisional playoff records for each of the NFL's six divisions.

	vs. AFC East	AFC Central	AFC West	NFC East	NFC Central	NFC West	Total
AFC East	7-7	9-11	10-8	2-3	1-1	0-1	29-31
AFC Central	11-9	5-5	10-15	2-0	1-0	1-2	30-31
AFC West	8-10	15-10	5-5	2-3	1-0	0-1	31-29
NFC East	3-2	0-2	3-2	6-6	17-9	16-14	45-35
NFC Central	1-1	0-1	0-1	9-17	—	9-8	19-28
NFC West	1-0	2-1	1-0	14-16	8-9	1-1	27-27

By Jeff Magalif

SWITCHING HORSES IN MIDSTREAM

Maybe there's some truth to the old bromide about a club needing fresh direction in order to fulfill its potential. In 1989 the Toronto Blue Jays became the eighth team in major league history to win a league or division title after a midseason change in managers. Oddly enough, success was no protection for those unlucky leaders: Six of the eight skippers who were jettisoned had winning records at the time of their dismissal. Listed below are the teams that found it easier to switch than fight, along with the records of the fired managers and their successors.

Year	Team	Manager (Record)	
		Beginning	Ending
1932	Chicago Cubs	Rogers Hornsby (53-44)	Charlie Grimm (37-20)
1938	Chicago Cubs	Charlie Grimm (45-36)	Gabby Hartnett (44-27)
1947	Brooklyn Dodgers	Clyde Sukeforth (1-0)	Burt Shotton (93-60)
1978	New York Yankees*	Billy Martin (52-42)	Bob Lemon (48-20)
1982	Milwaukee Brewers	Buck Rodgers (23-24)	Harvey Kuenn (72-43)
1983	Philadelphia Phillies	Pat Corrales (43-42)	Paul Owens (47-30)
1988	Boston Red Sox	John McNamara (43-42)	Joe Morgan (46-31)
1989	Toronto Blue Jays	Jimmy Williams (12-24)	Cito Gaston (77-49)

*Dick Howser managed one game (and lost it) post-Martin and pre-Lemon.

By Jerry Tapp

WAIT TILL THIS YEAR?

The Seattle Mariners are 15 years old this season, and they have yet to post a winning record. Listed below are the franchises that had the most consecutive losing seasons, their average winning percentage during their streak, and their best and worst winning percentage during their streak.

Franchise	Years	Seasons	Worst	Best	Avg.
Philadelphia Phillies	1933-48	16	.278	.448	.363
Boston Red Sox	1919-33	15	.279	.487	.386
Philadelphia-Kansas City A's	1953-67	15	.331	.474	.398
Philadelphia Phillies	1918-31	14	.283	.464	.375
Seattle Mariners	1977-90	14	.350	.481	.424
Philadelphia A's	1934-46	13	.318	.468	.372
St. Louis Browns	1930-41	12	.279	.455	.389
Boston Braves	1903-13	11	.291	.457	.360
Washington Senators	1901-11	11	.252	.455	.377
St. Louis Browns/Balt. Orioles	1946-56	11	.338	.448	.381
Brooklyn Dodgers	1904-14	11	.316	.487	.400
Cincinnati Reds	1945-55	11	.396	.487	.441

By Philip Meneely

RANDALL AND THE RUNNERS

In 1990 the Eagles' Randall Cunningham rushed for 942 yards, the second-highest total ever for an NFL quarterback. Only 18 times in NFL history have quarterbacks averaged 30 yards per game rushing for an entire season. Cunningham has achieved this mark the last five seasons. Billy Kilmer rushed for 478 yards in 14 games during 1962, but he played part-time at halfback as well as at quarterback. Therefore, that performance was not included on this list. Listed below are the NFL quarterbacks who averaged at least 30 rushing yards per game for a season.

Year	Quarterback, Team	Games	Yds.	Avg.
1972	Bobby Douglass, Bears	14	968	69.14
1990	Randall Cunningham, Eagles	16	942	58.88
1951	Tobin Rote, Packers	12	523	43.58
1951	Charlie Trippi, Cardinals	12	501	41.75
1988	Randall Cunningham, Eagles	16	624	39.00
1989	Randall Cunningham, Eagles	16	621	38.81
1971	Greg Landry, Lions	14	530	37.86
1973	Bobby Douglass, Bears	14	525	37.50
1972	Greg Landry, Lions	14	524	37.43
1961	Billy Kilmer, 49ers	14	509	36.36
1952	Bobby Layne, Lions	12	411	34.25
1986	Randall Cunningham, Eagles	16	540	33.75
1978	Steve Grogan, Patriots	16	539	33.69
1987	Randall Cunningham, Eagles	15	505	33.67
1956	Tobin Rote, Packers	12	398	33.17
1950	Johnny Lujack, Bears	12	397	33.08
1957	Tobin Rote, Lions	12	366	30.50
1948	Fred Enke, Lions	12	365	30.42

By Greg Thomas

EFFICIENCY UNDER CENTER

When talk turns to quarterbacking efficiency, the first name that comes up is usually that of Joe Montana. However, Montana isn't even in the top five in terms of single-season touchdown-to-interception ratio. The all-time leader? None other than Steve DeBerg, who in 1990 tossed 23 touchdown passes while surrendering only four interceptions. His touchdown-to-interception ratio was 5.75-to-1, the highest single-season mark for any quarterback who averaged at least one TD pass per scheduled game. Listed below are the quarterbacks who averaged at least three touchdown passes for every interception in a single season.

Rank	Player, Team	Year	Team Games	TDs	Ints.	Ratio
1.	Steve DeBerg, Chiefs	1990	16	23	4	5.75
2.	Bart Starr, Packers	1966	14	14	3	4.67
3.	Steve Bartkowski, Falcons	1983	16	22	5	4.40
4.	Milt Plum, Browns	1960	12	21	5	4.20
5.	Bart Starr, Packers	1964	14	15	4	3.75
5.	Roger Staubach, Cowboys	1971	14	15	4	3.75
7.	Chuck Connerly, Giants	1959	12	14	4	3.50
8.	Roman Gabriel, Rams	1969	14	24	7	3.43
9.	Otto Graham, Browns*	1946	14	17	5	3.40
10.	Dan Marino, Dolphins	1983	16	20	6	3.33
11.	Joe Montana, 49ers	1989	16	26	8	3.25
12.	Johnny Unitas, Colts	1964	14	19	6	3.17
13.	Ken O'Brien, Jets	1985	16	25	8	3.13

*The Browns played in the All-American Football Conference from 1946 to '49 before joining the NFL.

By Greg Thomas

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Who needs to see another celebrity jock?

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THE GOOD DOCTOR

I know what the head coach of the New York Giants earns, but what does the Giants defensive coordinator get?

B.C., LOCUST GROVE, N.Y.
The Cleveland job.

Patrick McEnroe, John's baby brother, is one of the top new players on the men's tennis tour. What's he like?

T.O., TULARE, CALIF.
He is a perfectly normal younger brother. Every time the McEnroes stay in the same hotel, Patrick runs to the room first and takes the bed near the window.

Jim Palmer making a comeback bid—what exactly was Jim's motivation?

E.W., SMITHFIELD, N.C.
To play in a Young-Timers Game.

Exactly whose idea was it for the Pan Am Games to be awarded to Cuba?

F.C., DELAVAN, WIS.
Must have been the Pans.

Since losing his fight with Terry Norris, what is Sugar Ray Leonard's disposition and what is Sugar Ray's morale?

B.A., MUNHALL, PA.
Sweet and low.

Bet you can't tell me what President Bush and Scott Norwood have in common.

S.B., GENEVA, ALA.
Bet I can. They're both too far to the right.

Do you think Deion Sanders should choose one sport over the other?

B.J., EDMOND, OKLA.
No. I'm just happy that there aren't two of him.

Lou Holtz wasn't really looking forward to his next season at Notre Dame, was he?

E.S., MAGNOLIA, ARK.
Nah. To quote Lou: "Gee whillikers, we're not really very good. Our tackles are kind of puny, and our quarterback is inexperienced, and our backs have bad backs, and our trainer can hardly apply a Band-Aid, and our band needs work in the trumpet section, and our leprechaun is nothing to shake a stick at, and I'm not even sure my assistant coaches are any good at assisting. I don't see how we can win more than 9 or 10 games."

Have you ever gone to one of those power boat races, Doc?

C.B., PASCO, WASH.
Yeah, but it was really phony. Chris Berman kept raving on and on about Miss Budweiser losing to Miss Bud Light.

You might have heard a few months ago about the Topps company manufacturing "Operation Desert Storm" trading cards. How do you feel about that?

S.H., STRATFORD, CONN.
I feel great. Some dude just offered me \$500 for my Schwarzkopf rookie card.

Up here in hockey country we don't have our own National Hockey League team, but what with San Jose getting one, California has two. What do Californians play hockey on?

I.H., HAMILTON, ONTARIO
Frozen Evian.

Should there be a tournament played after the season to decide college football's national champion?

B.M., LONGMONT, COLO.
No, but there should be a vote taken after the season—not during the season—to decide the Heisman Trophy.

New England needs help. What would make the Patriots a better football team?

I.F., HAVERHILL, MASS.
Somebody else signing Victor Kiam as a Plan B owner.

Gaylord Perry got elected to baseball's Hall of Fame. How do you feel about this?

F.J., FARMINGTON, MO.
I couldn't give a spit.

My son is left-handed and can throw a baseball more than 60 feet and more than 80 mph. What do we have the right to expect from him?

R.C., SAN LORENZO, CALIF.
Anywhere from \$2 million to \$5 million a season.

Who usually sits in the best three seats near the rink at Los Angeles Kings games?

B.M., ROCKMART, GA.
John Candy.

Could Hollywood come up with a good movie about the life and death of the great Red Grange?

R.E., CHARLESTON, ILL.
Yes. Picture Patrick Swayze, galloping.

How many times do NBA referees have to caution Manute Bol before giving him a technical foul?

C.B., TREMONTON, UTAH
In every game there are supposed to be two Manute warnings.

How long has professional bowling been featured on national television?

D.W., MIDDLETOWN, R.I.
Must be a long, long time now. All I know is that when I watched the other day, the first bowler I saw was Nelson Burton IV.

Phoenix is in the middle of another controversy. Is it over that Dr. Martin Luther King holiday again?

E.M., VIDALIA, LA.
Nope. Arizona officials have filed a lawsuit in federal court, claiming that the city of St. Louis misrepresented itself in negotiations and was supposed to send them the Cardinals baseball team.

What is the biggest problem young Phil Mickelson faces when joining the professional golf tour?

S.H., PIKESVILLE, MD.
Poor kid thinks slices go to the left and hooks go to the right. Silly lefties can't get anything right.

Now that Norman Braman has named a new coach, what's the best thing the Philadelphia Eagles have going for them this season?

P.D., HARRINGTON, DEL.
No Buddy.

Might you tell us the name of coach John Robinson's 1990 highlight film?

M.W., MOUNTAIN HOME, IDAHO
"Silence of the Rams." ■

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5. Old-Timer * ** Jerseys

100% flannel. Sewn lettering, button down front. Adult sizes S-M-L-XL. \$69.95 each. XXL \$79.95 (Hollywood/w star, number on back \$150.00)

6. NHL Jersey *

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MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

THE FAN

By WILL SMITH

Art Imitates Life

I DRIBBLED DOWN the center of a make-believe basketball court on a Hollywood sound stage. I ducked to the left, ducked to the right, charged the rim, leapt into the air, and plunged the ball through the hoop.

I had finally decided to let people see Will Smith the athlete on my TV show, "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air." In the episode, my character joins a prep school's all-white basketball team and immediately becomes the star player. Fresh Prince outmaneuvers every player on the team—and each time the director demanded a retake, I had to sink another basket. I had to make slam-dunking and dribbling look easy. It was a lot of pressure and took hours of choreography the night before, but in the end it was exhilarating. When I play basketball I have to be myself. You can't act to win.

From the beginning I was good at basketball, and I loved it. Maybe it was because I was taller than everybody else, which was definitely an advantage. I learned basketball on the streets and playgrounds of Philadelphia, and I learned a lot about not giving up.

I started playing on the streets when I was in sixth or seventh grade. I was good enough to play on my grade school team, Our Lady of Lourdes. I played almost every position. One year we went to the playoffs and were the winning team. At the time, Julius Erving—Dr. J—was my role model in basketball, and my dad was my role model in life. It was my father who encouraged me at basketball and in everything else.

One day he gave me an invaluable lesson. He took me to an empty lot, and he told me he was going to put up his own building,



What I always liked about Julius Erving was that he was well spoken. I always wanted to speak as properly as he did, to be able to impress people.

start his own company. He told me we were going to build a wall, which would be the front of a building. I said it was impossible, but he told me just to start digging. In a week the wall was finished, and I had learned something invaluable: that nothing in life is impossible.

Today, however, I am about as far away from the concrete sidewalks of my neighborhood as you can get. I've been a rap singer since I was 17 as part of the duo DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince. I've made a million dollars, won a Grammy, been on MTV, and now—at the ripe old age of 22—I have my own television series. It's hard for me to believe, but I'm a role model for a lot of young kids. I have to take this seriously, perhaps as seriously as the role models I chose as a kid—all basketball players: Julius Erving, Michael Jordan, and Magic Johnson.

What I always liked about Dr. J was that he was well spoken. I always wanted to speak as properly as he did, to be able to impress people. That's one of the reasons I think I like rap music. It's a way of expressing yourself, a way of channeling your emotions. So is basketball.

One reason blacks excel at basketball is economic. Basketball is a wonderful sport for poor black kids because it doesn't cost a lot of money. Black kids can't afford golf, or tennis lessons; they don't have swimming pools at home. We would just put up a milk crate as a rim and play our hearts out. It was fun—and completely within our economic reach.

At first I thought I wanted to be Michael Jordan or Dr. J, but then I started rapping at parties with my friend, DJ Jazzy Jeff. Then we made our first album, it became a huge hit, and we were on our way to a recording career.

Even though I was only 17, I had learned a lot about myself, especially from playing basketball. I had learned that I like to win. I could see very early on that I was a competitive person. I hate to lose—hate it. But strangely, losing didn't defeat me like it defeated other kids. I didn't withdraw or feel bad about myself. I didn't lose my confidence. It just fueled me to practice harder. I feel the same way now: If we lose in the ratings I feel the same way I feel when I lose a basketball game. I know that two people can't win, so I want to be the one that does.

The feeling I had from winning a basketball game was great—anytime you win anything it's great—but it wasn't about that rush to the basket or being popular or getting girls. What I liked was that inner feeling of knowing I'm good at something.

I do a lot of things that I really like. Each is a different part of my personality, and each makes me feel good about myself in a different way, but basketball is definitely my favorite sport. It's my passion, and it's also a great life teacher. You learn to win and then lose and come back again and win again. ■

Like the man says, he's done it all. WILL SMITH—recording star, rap artist, and Mike Tyson challenger—can be seen on the NBC sitcom, "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air."

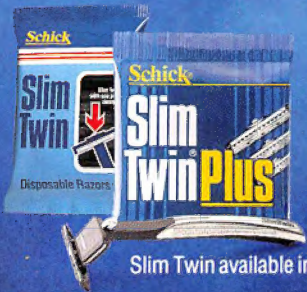
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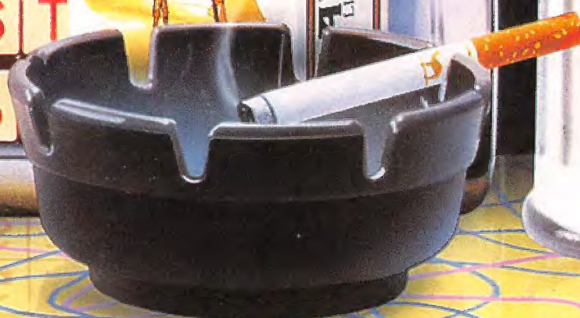
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